

HEALING THE HEART OF RWANDA:  
TOWARDS A THEORY OF TRANSFORMATIVE RECONCILIATION

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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May 2011

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Cornell University 2011

This study explores post-conflict reconciliation in four local organizations promoting reconciliation in Rwanda: two Christian programs and two women's programs. The transformative learning literature from adult education and the reconciliation literature from various fields are synthesized in an effort to develop a theory of *transformative reconciliation* by analyzing participant experiences within the four organizations. The concept of transformative reconciliation was developed to address well-recognized weaknesses in reconciliation theory and practice, by making distinctions between multiple kinds of reconciliation and clarifying what supports and impedes them. Additionally, certain weaknesses in the transformative learning literature are addressed by applying the theory to the post-genocide Rwandan context.

This study employs the qualitative case study method to interpret profoundly personal experiences of genocide and reconciliation within each organization and within the larger sociopolitical context. In addition to years of prior experience in the region, the two fieldwork phases of this study totaled over a year. Beyond the initial survey of many programs, research methods included unstructured interviews of organization leaders and participants, observation of program activities and reconciliation retreats, document analysis, and a wider study of the sociopolitical context of Rwanda. A full case report was created for each organization, and its position within the overall context was closely considered.

The findings of this study reveal that Christian organizations are assisted in promoting transformative reconciliation by a combination of political, cultural, psychological, historical,

and pedagogical factors. One women's empowerment program had less dramatic but potentially more powerful results over the long run. The fourth program for widows of the genocide was quite effective in transformative *learning* but was limited by contextual factors in promoting transformative reconciliation. Drawing from the four cases, this study offers nine distinct recommendations for reconciliation programming in post conflict environments.

In regards to the theory base, this study provides a fruitful way of viewing reconciliation of multiple types within complex sociopolitical environments. It also provides insight into several areas of weakness in transformative learning theory, including: negative transformations, other-than-rational learning processes, the role of power and context, the importance of culture, and the notion of *surrender* as authentic transformation.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Julia Burns, more commonly known as Julie, holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Minnesota, and a Masters in Public Affairs from Cornell University. Her doctoral research in Adult Education arose out of a desire to understand the terrible events in Central Africa, where she served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the North Kivu region of former Zaire in the years preceding the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Julie has an extensive background in experiential and transformative educational methodologies, having worked for many years with Outward Bound, National Outdoor Leadership School, and Cornell Outdoor Education. She has also conducted many programs overseas, especially for the college-age population. Her first forays into the post-conflict reconciliation arena were with the Conflict Transformation across Cultures (CONTACT) program at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. She has been a consultant to several large development agencies in Central Africa, and continues to work with corporate and non-profit groups in the areas of intercultural communication, conflict resolution, and teambuilding. She is fluent in French and Swahili, and is looking forward to learning new languages in Guinea, West Africa, where she will be posted as the Country Director for Peace Corps in July 2011.

Dedicated to those who will hear the story of the other.

Only they can heal the heart of Rwanda.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the years of completing this project, I have had a running mental list of all the people who have made this research possible, and to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude. More people than can be mentioned here have supported me on the path. First and foremost are my committee members, Mark Conostas, Rosemary Caffarella, and Johanna Schoss. They have been incredibly patient with my process of coming to terms with both deeply troubling and inspiring events in Rwanda, and with my “life happening” along the way. They have also provided me a wealth of insights, together and apart, that greatly enhanced my ability to think through the hard parts of this research. For their wisdom and humanity, I am so thankful, words cannot suffice.

My manner of engaging with this research has been very internal, and therefore I am especially thankful for the few colleagues who have remained by my side throughout. Head and shoulders above the rest is Leah Mayor, who has come through for me in the first hour, the last hour, and many hours in between. I am also incredibly fortunate to be able to draw on a variety of close friendships with Rwandan colleagues who have shared their dark fears and tender hopes with me. My deepest respect to Joseph, Fidela, Danny, Patrick, Charles, Liliose, and Jean though she is not Rwandan by birth.

In Rwanda, so many organizations and individuals trusted me to come in and see what they do and who they are, without any assurance I would see the best in them. This includes the fierce survivors of Duhozanye, the strong smiling ladies of Gahaya Links, and the jubilant and profound retreat-goers at the Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR) and African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE). Many people in these organizations have not only inspired me, I consider them my mentors, elders, and close friends. Especially cherished among them are people named with both real full names and pseudonym first names in this research, including Arthur and Molly Rouner (at PCR), Daphrose Mukarutamu and Clara (at Duhozanye), Francois and Kathy (at AEE), and Joy Ndungutse (at Gahaya Links). Presenting them with all the love and respect I feel for them and their work, while also expressing my concerns about the political context in Rwanda, has not been easy.

Despite the fits and starts of my graduate study, I have benefited from several sources of funding at Cornell University that have been critical to the success of this project. The Peace Studies Program at Cornell awarded me with several graduate fellowships, while the Einaudi Center for International Studies and the Graduate School funded most of my field research. I especially thank Matthew Evangelista for his support with funding, for providing me enjoyable teaching work with the Peace Studies Program, and for seeming to understand me without the need for many words. The Department of Education and the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs also funded major parts of my doctoral studies. Lastly, I am thankful to the US Department of Education for the Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship in French, without which I would not have been able to resuscitate my buried French nearly so well. Individuals at Cornell who have supported me in many different ways include Rose Hulslander, Barbara Armstrong, Joann Molnar, all the librarians at Olin and Mann, and many more.

Finally, for family and friends who have endured long separations (geographic or otherwise), I am so thankful. My mother, father and eldest brother engaged most heartfully with my research, but even my siblings who don't "get it" accept it as part of who I am. To Stina, Bev, Bert, Bethy, Jan, Margaret, Kathy, Al and Irene Silverman, the Farley/Richardson household, and yes to Simba and Caspar, thanks for keeping me laughing and meeting me where I am. And last but never least, to my Paul, my "dissertation survivor." *Ndagukunda ichane.*



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEE	African Evangelistic Enterprise
CDP	Civilian Defense Program Civilians armed under Habyarimana
CDR	Coalition for the Defense of the Republic A Hutu extremist party begun in the liberalization of the 1990s
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, also called Congo
FAR	Rwandan Armed Forces
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
MDR	Democratic Republican Movement, formerly PARMEHUTU
MRND	National Revolutionary Movement for Development Habyarimana's party
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PARMEHUTU	Party for the Emancipation of the Hutu Kayibanda's party, led the revolution of 1959
PCR	Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army Army of the RPF, usually referred to as RPF
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front Tutsi-dominated guerilla army from Uganda, now in power
RTL M	Free Television and Radio of the Thousand Hills "Hate radio" during the genocide
UNAMIR	United Nations Mission for Rwanda

## LIST OF TERMS IN KINYARWANDA

Note: All terms in *Kinyarwanda* unless otherwise noted. Only terms that appear in multiple places in the text are listed here.

<i>akazu</i>	Literally, “little house,” a word for the inner circle of power.
<i>banyarwanda</i>	Persons of Rwandan origin throughout region. <i>Banyamulenge</i> and <i>barutshuru</i> are <i>banyarwanda</i> in Congo.
<i>burgomaster</i>	English form of Germanic term for mayor.
<i>foyers sociaux</i> women’s	French: social clubs for women in post-colonial era, sites of active involvement in community affairs.
<i>gacaca</i>	Localized tribunals to try <i>genocidaires</i> .
<i>genocidaire(s)</i>	French: person(s) who perpetrate genocide.
<i>ibiyitso</i>	Traitor
<i>imaana</i>	God in Rwandan religious belief.
<i>i/umudugudu</i>	Literally “agglomeration” or village(s) where post-genocide population is concentrated.
<i>ingando</i>	Solidarity camps run by post genocide government.
<i>inkotanyi</i>	Early usage of term refers to assassins of the <i>mwami</i> ’s court. Now refers to RPF members both pre- and post-genocide, means impenetrable, or fierce.
<i>interahamwe</i>	Literally “those who aim at the same target,” refers to the militia of the MRND. <i>Interahamwe</i> is synonymous with <i>genocidaire</i> .
<i>inyenzi</i>	Cockroaches. Refers to RPF specifically, Tutsi broadly.
<i>Kinyarwanda</i>	The language of Rwanda, more accurately <i>ikinyarwanda</i> .
<i>kubohoza</i>	Literally, “to liberate” or “free up” with force. Term used for forcible recruitment to militias and for rape.
<i>mwami</i>	The king in traditional political and religious organization.
<i>ngoma</i>	Drum. Refers to a variety of traditional practices that may not use a drum.

<i>nyabingi</i>	A religious cult based in northern Rwanda.
<i>prefecture - prefect</i>	The equivalent of a region with a governor.
<i>umuganda</i>	Unpaid communal labor. Referred to obligation to kill during genocide.
<i>rescape(es)</i>	“Survivor(s)” in French.
<i>ryangombe</i>	A religious cult, also known as <i>kubandwa</i> .

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Mass violence along ethnic and political lines has become very common in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In many countries, governments and citizens find themselves struggling to rebuild society, recreate a sense of community, and effect a strategic reconciliation in the wake of brutal sociopolitical conflict. Rwanda stands, in many ways, as the quintessential case of a country struggling to reconcile in the wake of war and genocide. This study seeks to understand processes of post-conflict reconciliation in Rwanda, and to shed light on what promotes or impedes those processes. Employing the lens of transformative learning theory, this study offers a new perspective to the growing literature on reconciliation in post-conflict societies.

In the last 25 years, there has been increasing emphasis on reconciliation after mass violence worldwide; but post-conflict reconciliation programs are limited by the lack of empirical proof of what works and why (Quinn, 2009a). Furthermore, across the literature, rarely do scholars and professionals operate from a shared understanding, or even a clear definition, of reconciliation (Hamber & Kelly, 2004; 2009). On a national level, reconciliation efforts may include truth commissions, reparations, gender justice programs, security sector reforms, or memorialization efforts such as commemorative events and monuments (ICTJ, 2008). Many societies have utilized traditional methods of reconciliation or have developed their own, local mechanisms to promote reconciliation (e.g., Rwanda's *gacaca*), and there is growing consensus that local approaches are preferable (Huyse & Salter, 2008).<sup>1</sup> In addition, private efforts to promote reconciliation abound, and these vary widely in their approaches, which include psychosocial support, traditional rituals or ceremonies, religious healing programs, dramatic and artistic expression, educational interventions, and more.

There are a number of important debates about which reconciliation approaches work best in which circumstances, as well as how contextual factors constrain reconciliation programs

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<sup>1</sup> For example, some communities in post-civil war Mozambique used traditional healers to perform ceremonies, rather than pursue the truth-telling strategies of a truth commission (Igreja & Dias-Lambrance, 2008).

and policies. Some approaches promoted as valuable by one field of practitioners and scholars are deemed harmful by other fields of practitioners and scholars.<sup>2</sup> Even where approaches to post-conflict reconciliation appear to be successful in some respects, observers question whether they achieve true reconciliation or simply peaceful co-existence (Hamber & Kelly, 2009). Peaceful coexistence can be seen as a form of reconciliation that neither requires forgiveness nor transformation but rather implores people to continue as if the circumstances are “just as usual” (Hamber & Kelly, 2009) or, as many Rwandans say, to “live as we did before.” While peaceful coexistence is itself a major accomplishment in a post-conflict environment like Rwanda’s, it can only assure the relative absence of violence, rather than the transformation of sociopolitical life deemed essential to building a sustainable peace (Lederach, 1997).

In this study, I deliberately apply transformative learning theory to understanding four Rwandan organizations and their approaches to, and experiences of, reconciliation. I propose new understandings of post-conflict reconciliation, while also further developing transformative learning theory. Transformative learning theory in adult education has its early origins in Paolo Freire’s work (1970) with the conscientization of peasants in Brazil. The theory was further developed by a number of key contributors, some of whom focus on social transformation while others focus on individual transformation. The most notable contributor to the concept of individual transformative learning is Mezirow (1978a, 1978b), whose theory of *perspective transformation* describes how adults undergo fundamental changes in their worldviews through developmental processes or through crises.<sup>3</sup> Mezirow’s theory has spawned a major area of research in adult education (Taylor, 2007). Like Mezirow, this study emphasizes individual transformation as a factor in contributing to social change, rather than the reverse.

Mezirow’s original theory of perspective transformation entailed 10 stages, beginning

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the debate between Roth and Des Forges, and Cobban, about whether restorative justice mechanisms like the gacaca are “therapy” or “justice.” Boston Review, Summer 2002, p. 51-52. Retrieved April 16, 2011, from <http://helenacobban.org/Rwanda-exchange.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Transformative learning and transformational learning are used interchangeably in this study as they are in the relevant literature. Perspective transformation is Mezirow’s (1978b) original term, but the former terms are more commonly used.



with the disorienting dilemma: a situation that cannot be effectively interpreted with existing meaning structures. The disorienting dilemma precipitates a process of deep questioning whereby previously held beliefs about one's self and the social world are called into question. And, through a series steps, not necessarily sequential in order, the learner emerges with a frame of reference (i.e. meaning) that is "more inclusive, differentiating, permeable, critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). Since Mezirow's original study (1978a), transformative learning has been studied empirically in a wide range of populations and on a wide variety of catalyzing events that range from participants in international programs (e.g., Kiely, 2002) to patients diagnosed with terminal illnesses (e.g., Baumgartner, 2002). While transformative learning theory has been used to interpret learning in a few cases of societal rupture or violence (e.g., King, 2003), it has never been used to view post-genocide reconciliation. Yet, both the massive disorienting dilemma of genocide and the slow painful recovery from it can be seen through a transformative lens. In addition, many of the theory's recognized areas of weakness are areas in which this study provides further insight. These include:

1. The possibility that transformative learning can be negative (McDonald, 1999; Brookfield, 1994), or that it may cause an *adaptive but narrowed* perspective.
2. That it is not always a rational process, as originally asserted by Mezirow (Clark and Wilson, 1991); but rather proceeds through affect (e.g., Yorks & Kasl, 2002), imagination (Dirkx, 2001a, 2001b), soma (Amann, 2003), visions and dreams (Elias, 1993), spirituality (Tisdell, 2003; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2003) and other means.
3. That it may not entail "critical discourse," as Mezirow (1978a) and others (e.g., Merriam, 2004; Kegan, 2000) argue, and that "social action" might be considerably internalized or constrained (McDonald, 1999) in a tense political climate, such as Rwanda's.
4. That context brings meaning to experience, and therefore transformative learning cannot be viewed apart from culture and power (Clark & Wilson, 1991).
5. That transformative learning may not necessarily be about gaining greater independence and control (the Western male ideal represented by Mezirow's work) but may be about greater interconnectedness with others (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Belenky & Stanton, 2000) and acceptance of what is beyond one's control (King, 2003).
6. That transformative learning theory can be applied to non-Western cultures (e.g. Merriam & Ntseane, 2008), something that few researchers have shown.

This study also explores how post-conflict reconciliation through the lens of transformative learning may lead to more sustained rapprochement. While the concept of reconciliation is as old as human history (Lederach, 1997) and many indigenous societies have retained methods of managing conflict (Zartman, 2000), secular attempts to promote reconciliation instead of retribution in the aftermath of political and social violence are relatively new in much of the world (Amstutz, 2005). However, very little is established about how to promote reconciliation that truly transforms the social reality undergirding the conflict (Hamber & Kelly, 2004). Theoretical development of the concept of reconciliation is challenged by three basic problems (Quinn, 2009a): 1) lack of a shared definition across disciplines; 2) the question of whether reconciliation is a process or an end-point; and 3) the level at which it operates (individual or collective). In fact, much of the disagreement over the concept of reconciliation is about the level at which it operates: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intercommunal, national, or international.<sup>4</sup> Most theorists on the subject would agree that reconciliation entails some degree of “building or rebuilding of relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatreds of yesterday,” and that this operates on both personal and political levels (Quinn, 2009a, p. 4). Yet, the current discourse sheds little light on a critical understanding of how to build or rebuild such relationships. This study posits that reconciliation that is *transformative* promotes the building of new relationships among parties, which may be the foundation of a more sustainable peace. Furthermore this study provides insights about what supports and impedes transformative reconciliation.

Understanding reconciliation through the lens of transformative learning theory helps to

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<sup>4</sup> Many scholars and practitioners, particularly in political science and law, focus on top-down processes of reconciliation (e.g., Amstutz, 2005; Du Toit, 2009). Certain key scholars/practitioners focus on the middle levels of sociopolitical organization (particularly Lederach, 1997; 2001). And a rather large group of scholar/practitioners, especially from the field of psychology, is focused on interpersonal and/or intergroup processes (e.g. Govier, 2009; Worthington, 2006; Luskin, 2001; Enright, 1992; and many others). Meanwhile, a growing body of scholarship has argued for the importance of indigenous reconciliation processes (e.g. Quinn, 2009b; Zartman, 2000; Irani, 2004; Shaw, 2005; and others). Taking the field as a whole, there is bulk at the top and bulk at the bottom, but very little in the middle. Furthermore, linkages between individual and societal reconciliation are very insufficiently studied (Quinn, 2009a).

unpack some of the daunting complexity of post-conflict reconciliation in two specific ways. First, the term transformative is frequently used in the reconciliation literature, but appears to have had no conceptual development. Thus, delineating a type of reconciliation that is transformative in nature assists in narrowing the range of disagreement over the concept itself. For some, reconciliation is simply an agreement to go on living side by side without violence, while for others it requires a much deeper engagement in relationship with the “other” or even a transformation of that relationship. This work seeks to clarify some of the tension and confusion of terms within the literature itself.

Second, there is already sizable overlap between the literatures of reconciliation and transformational learning which have yet to be explored and understood. For example, meaning making is core to transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 2000; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007; Cranton & Roy, 2003; Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998; Daloz, 1986), while reconciliation theorists emphasize the importance of “coming to terms with” or making meaning of the experience (e.g., Hamber, 2009; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Worthington, 2006). The (debated) importance of taking social action (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Freire, 1970; Inglis, 1997; 1998) and the clearer sense of “needing to be of service to others” (Courtenay et al, 1998) in the transformative learning literature mirrors “altruism born of suffering” (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Staub & Pearlman, 2001), new social/political covenants (Lederach, 1997) and “developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society” (Hamber & Kelly, 2004) from the reconciliation literature.<sup>5</sup> Both transformative learning and reconciliation literatures contemplate the role of empathy (e.g., Belenky et al, 1986; Jordan, Walker & Hartling, 2004 in adult learning theory; and Lederach, 1997; Staub & Pearlman, 2001; Hamber & Kelley, 2009; Govier, 2009, in reconciliation theory). The concept of empowerment is well developed in the transformational learning literature (Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 2000; Inglis, 1997), but named

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, as a prominent scholar and practitioner in reconciliation, Lederach (1997, p. 64) uses the term conscientization to refer to the need to raise awareness, of, for example, war as a “system,” although he does not attribute the term conscientization to Freire (1970).

without conceptual development in the reconciliation literature. Both literatures also have ongoing debates about rational vs. other ways of knowing and learning (including spirituality and religion), especially where studies occur across cultures (Merriam & Ntseane 2008; Tisdell, 2003; and Tisdell & Tolliver, 2003 in transformational learning theory, and Igreja & Dias-Lambrance, 2008; Huyse & Salter, 2008; and Helmick & Peterson, 2001, in reconciliation theory).

A more practical reason to introduce a concept such as transformative reconciliation is that it allows practitioners to focus on approaches that really do promote enhanced understanding between groups, wider conceptions of identity, and hope and commitment to building a better future. Thus, transformative learning theory can assist in promoting post-conflict reconciliation, as it has excelled in understanding how people make sense of disorienting experiences and how they integrate those experiences into more effective, expansive and inclusive worldviews.

### Historical Context

In 1994, in the space of about 100 days, Rwanda was the site of an exceptionally brutal genocide of nearly a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu, directed by the state but mostly carried out by ordinary citizens in every corner of the country (Des Forges, 1999). Episodes of ethnic violence had begun in the years preceding independence in 1962 and continue sporadically to this day in Rwanda, and more regularly in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). While there is considerable evidence that the Tutsi had already established dominance over Hutu before the arrival of German and Belgian colonial powers, the colonial administrations made the distinctions between Hutu and Tutsi more fixed and oppressive than they had been previously (Newbury, 1988; Mamdani, 2001; Prunier, 1997). Initially, the colonialists strongly privileged the Tutsi, but the Hutu gained power in the build-up to independence (1959-1962). Hutu did not lose power until after the genocide was stopped in 1994 by the Tutsi-led rebel army from Uganda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Rwanda today is governed by the RPF in what most experts regard as a politically repressive (if progressive) autocracy (Pottier, 2002;

2005; Kinzer, 2011; Straus & Waldorf, 2011).

In colonial-era Rwanda, the Hutu were oppressed; in post-colonial Rwanda the Tutsi were oppressed; in post-genocidal Rwanda, this difference is obscured and the official line is, “no Hutu, no Tutsi, only Rwandan.” However, to an aware observer, this assertion is highly dubious. While it is true that people in Rwanda today generally avoid using the terms Hutu and Tutsi loudly, other pseudonyms have readily replaced them, especially terms that refer to categories of experience. The experiences of certain categories, such as “genocide survivor,” (Tutsi) are publicly validated, while the experiences of other categories, such as Hutu survivor of RPF violence, are denied (Burnet, 2005; Rombouts, 2004; Lemarchand, 2010; Sebarenzi, 2010). Certain forms of discussion of the past are allowed and indeed required, such as the compulsory *gacaca* tribunals, and the *ingando* solidarity camps, both billed as vehicles to reconciliation.<sup>6</sup> Yet other forms of discussion are forbidden and are commonly prosecuted under very loose legislation outlawing “genocide ideology” or “divisionism” (Straus & Waldorf, Sebarenzi, 2009).

Given Rwanda’s constrictive political climate and the culture’s renowned reserve, there is very little opportunity for the critical discourse upon which much transformative learning theory depends. Likewise, the mutual sharing of experience and two-way acknowledgement of contributions to the conflict upon which profound reconciliation is thought to depend (Lederach, 2001; Hamber & Kelly, 2004) is politically limited.<sup>7</sup> Given this reality, it is easy to argue that the reconciliation that is promoted by the government in Rwanda today is really “peaceful coexistence” rather than reconciliation that is truly transformative (Sebarenzi, 2010).

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<sup>6</sup> Both of these been heavily criticized by both internal and external parties for (among other things) their one-sided nature and their promotion of the RPF version of Rwandan history (Burnet, 2008; Pottier, 2002; Sebarenzi, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> As Hamber and Kelly (2004, p. 4) state, “To build reconciliation, individuals and institutions need to acknowledge their own role in the conflicts of the past, accepting and learning from it in a constructive way so as to guarantee non-repetition.”

## Programmatic Context

In this highly controlled Rwandan political environment, there are many non-governmental programs that purport to promote reconciliation. Foreign aid and development agencies support a variety of programs, including government ministerial projects, youth training programs, widows' support agencies, cooperative development enterprises, and more. Local non-governmental agencies (NGO) have partnered with a wide variety of international NGOs to provide a myriad of reconciliation programming, including coffee cooperatives, skills development centers, summer camps for youth, and many more. Most notable perhaps are the Christian programs, which have flourished in the post-genocide era (Cantrell, 2007; US Dept of State, 2006). Some of these programs were initiated by and/or are supported by Western evangelicals, such as Rick Warren, who has made Rwanda one of his "purpose-driven" nations (Cantrell, 2007; 2009). Others programs come from Africa-wide evangelical organizations, such as African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE). Still others are local Christian churches supported by Christian visitors to Rwanda who have become committed to the Christian work of reconciliation in Rwanda.<sup>8</sup>

Within this flurry of non-governmental activity to promote reconciliation, purportedly transformational experiences of reconciliation and even forgiveness between survivors and perpetrators in Rwanda have been increasingly documented (Rucyahana, 2007; Ilibagiza, 2007; Sebarinzi, 2009; Rouner, 2002; Larson, 2009; and others), the bulk of them from a religious standpoint.<sup>9</sup> The fact that these experiences are occurring despite a constrictive political climate seems to suggest that there is more going on in Rwandan reconciliation than can be answered by our current theories of reconciliation or transformational learning. On a practical level, we need to know more about how such profound reconciliation is occurring, and what factors support and sustain it.

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<sup>8</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009).

<sup>9</sup> For a short list of non-governmental organizations doing reconciliation work in Rwanda, see Peacemakers Trust, at: <http://www.peacemakers.ca/research/Africa/RwandaPeaceLinks.html>, last accessed on April 16, 2011.

## Study Design

This study focuses on a poorly understood social phenomenon within the extraordinarily complex setting of post-genocide Rwanda. It does not seek to measure how often reconciliation and transformation occur, but rather how and why they occur or don't occur, according to the people most implicated in these processes in their natural setting. I selected a qualitative case study design for this study because this design excels when the focus of a study is how and why questions, when the behavior of those involved in the study cannot be manipulated, and when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2003). Context is, in fact, integral to this study, and the case study method allows me to treat it a set of interesting variables in an interrelated fashion (Yin, 1994). The objective of the case study method is not to generalize findings to a much larger set of cases, but to obtain very detailed data about a case or set of cases that allow much deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question. As Rwandan organizations pursue a variety of means to promote reconciliation, this study examines a number of cases in depth, making it a *multiple-case* study (Stake, 1995). The individual participants within each organization are primary sources of data on the phenomenon in question, making this a case study with nested units (Patton, 2002).

In selecting cases for this study, I followed the growing literature about reconciliation in Rwanda, which provides compelling reasons to look at women's organizations in particular. The pilot study, conducted in 2007, also provided compelling reasons to look at religious (i.e. Christian) reconciliation programs.<sup>10</sup> By all accounts, women's associations in Rwanda have flourished in the post-genocide period (Burnet, 2005; Newbury & Baldwin, 2000; 2001b; Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005; and others). They have come together to address a myriad of problems that women confront in post-genocide Rwanda, such as raising orphans without assistance; infection with AIDS; and profound poverty due to their husbands' death or

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<sup>10</sup> There is overlap between the terms organization, association, and program, and I use them at times interchangeably. Women's associations refer to themselves as such, but to avoid repetitive language I often refer to them as organizations, while I use the word program to refer to the specific part of an organization that does reconciliation work.

imprisonment. Some of these women's associations act as mutual support groups, while others directly promote economic cooperation and advancement. Some authors (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000) argue that women's associations in Rwanda tended to perpetuate ethnic divisions in the years after the genocide, whereas other authors (e.g., Burnet, 2005) suggest that at least some of these associations have become sites where women eventually come into contact with the stories of women on other sides of social divides, most commonly Hutu-Tutsi divides. In addition, several programs had been described to me by Rwandans living in the US as "multi-ethnic," which seemed to warrant further investigation of women's organizations as sites where transformative reconciliation might be occurring. Furthermore, women are on the rise in Rwanda, currently occupying 56% of the seats in the Parliament (McCrummen, 2008), suggesting transformations of gender identities on both personal and societal levels.<sup>11</sup>

I did not originally intend for this study to include religious (specifically Christian) reconciliation programs, but by mid-2008 at least two Church-based reconciliation programs seemed to warrant further attention. During the pilot study in 2007, I witnessed what appeared to be profound experiences of reconciliation between professed killers and survivors after their participation in certain retreats. At these religious retreats, discussion of politically charged topics was noticeably less constrained, even when government officials (e.g., a *gacaca* official) were present. I was intrigued by the government's relative leniency with the way churches discussed Rwandan ethnicity and by the apparent intensity of retreatants' experience. When I discovered the growing literature about reconciliation in Christian programs, I decided to include two religious programs in the study.

Selection of cases for intensive research and final analysis was an iterative process. Once the study expanded to include religious groups, selection criteria for organizations remained consistent and included the following: minimum sizes of membership, approaches to

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<sup>11</sup> Rwanda was predominantly female (70%) in the aftermath of the genocide, and the RPF led by Kagame has been very progressive about gender. The Parliament is required by law to have at least 30% women, but has far surpassed that number, at 56% by the close of 2008 (McCrummen, 2008).



reconciliation utilizing empathy and/or empowerment, leadership by Rwandese, relative independence from the government, and demographic heterogeneity. Approaches to reconciliation among these organizations varied considerably. Ultimately two similar cases were selected (both religious programs) and two more cases (both women's programs) that were dissimilar from each other. All four organizations claimed to be successfully promoting reconciliation.

The theoretical foundations of the study gave me certain preconceived notions of what transformative reconciliation would “look like,” and I developed study propositions to guide case selection, data collection, and ultimately data analysis. However, I wanted to avoid conveying any expectation that reconciliation should be occurring, especially as some Rwandans feel pressured to reconcile, either by the government or by foreign funders and visitors (Hatzfeld, 2007).<sup>12</sup> To open the study to as many experiences and perspectives as possible, and to ground the study in the transformative learning literature, the research questions were quite broadly focused on learning within the organizations:

1. How and why did this organization form?
2. What learning, intended and unintended, occurs in this organization?
3. How does this learning support personal and/or social recovery and/or reconciliation?
4. How does transformative learning theory assist in understanding the learning in this organization?
5. How does the learning in this organization assist in developing transformative learning theory?

As is typical of qualitative case studies, this study employed semi-structured qualitative interviews, participant observation, and analysis of documents within the organizations. I also gathered an abundance of contextual data over several years of sporadic research in Rwanda

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<sup>12</sup> Many participants in this study spoke of the government's pressure to reconcile, but none mentioned pressure from foreigners. However, Hatzfeld's (2007) excellent third book on Rwandan survivors and killers mentions such pressure multiple times.

(early and mid-2006; mid-2007; and seven months in 2008-2009).

Within-case analysis was performed using thematic analysis, and each succeeding case was influenced by the analysis of preceding cases, so that themes were revised as within-case analysis proceeded. This is essentially the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), except that some categories were derived from literature or from developing theory, rather than from the inductive process. Cross-case analysis first compared the two religious programs that were quite similar to each other, and then compared findings from them to the two women's organizations that are slightly dissimilar from each other. Conclusions about the typical learning outcomes for each organization (i.e., transformational learning, transformational reconciliation, or neither) were drawn and reasons for differential outcomes were analyzed in regards to certain political and cultural factors of the Rwandan context.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study does not attempt to cover a representative range of reconciliation programs in Rwanda, and it offers no formalized way to account for external contextual factors (e.g., the *gacaca*), which may exert considerable influence on the outcomes of any organization's work. Because the study's final analysis focuses on two women's groups and two religious groups of mixed gender, it runs the risk of drawing conclusions about reconciliation programming that may owe more to gender issues (especially when it comes to rape) than to programmatic approaches and activities. Importantly, this study makes no special claim to ascertain how women and men deal with genocide or reconciliation differently from each other. It is a retrospective study, but not a longitudinal one, which is an area of recognized weakness in transformative learning theory (Taylor, 2007). Events and discourses in context continually shape memory, as Hatzfeld (2007) notes in one of the only longitudinal views on Rwandan reconciliation. Furthermore, this study has only one researcher, with all the biases and predispositions that she carried into the field. Gaining access to Hutu who suffered at the hands of Tutsi is somewhat difficult, and perhaps if the study had focused on very small local groups, more Hutu of this category would have been

reached and could have been included in the study. With all of its advantages and disadvantages, this study is just one “snapshot” taken at the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> year after the genocide.

### Significance of the Study

This study makes a number of theoretical contributions. It provides much needed elaboration in several areas of weakness in transformative learning theory, including: how power shapes the process and outcome, the roles of spirituality and culture, the operation of non-rational processes, the potentiality of very negative but adaptive perspective transformation, expansion of the concept of empowerment, and the application of transformative learning theory to the “disorienting dilemma” of genocide. Within reconciliation theory, this study provides evidence of several levels of what people and organizations call “reconciliation,” only the last of which can fairly be called transformative. It also provides evidence for the proposition that transformative reconciliation is built on both empathetic processes and empowerment processes.

Speaking in more practical terms, this study sheds light on important dimensions of reconciliation in the four Rwandan programs, specifically what factors may encourage reconciliation and what factors may impede it. Furthermore the impact of cultural and political context is considered in analyzing how and why some programs might be more successful than others in promoting reconciliation. From conclusions about the Rwandan programs, a number of recommendations are offered to improve program and policy design in Rwanda and other post-conflict environments.<sup>13</sup>

### Organizational Overview

This dissertation proceeds in the following progression of chapters: Chapter One offers an overall introduction to the study. Chapter Two provides a discussion of the historical and cultural context of Rwanda, and focuses on certain issues of great debate in Rwanda, including the origins of its peoples; the nature of the relationships between them during the pre-colonial

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<sup>13</sup> There is no clear line between conflict and post-conflict (especially in Rwanda, where active violence continues in neighboring DRC), and further discussion of what characterizes “post conflict” is beyond the scope of this study.

and colonial era; the genocide of 1994 and its aftermath; and the political climate of present-day Rwanda. Women's organizations and the role of Christian reconciliation programs in Rwanda are covered in more depth. In Chapter Three, the transformative learning literature is reviewed and then merged with reconciliation literature to provide a theoretical foundation for the concept of transformative reconciliation. Chapter Four describes in some detail the research methods of this study. Chapter Five provides a very descriptive case report for each of the four organizations at the center of this study, and analyzes all data sources for important themes. Chapter Six is a cross-case analysis of the four programs, which sets the stage for Chapter Seven. The beginning of Chapter Seven entails conclusions about learning in the organizations and key propositions guiding the study. Next, it discusses post-conflict reconciliation in the Rwandan context and several features of importance. Then the chapter considers the implications of the study for theory; first by showing how transformative learning theory assisted in analyzing the data, and then proposing the way in which the developing theory of transformative reconciliation is supported by the study.

## CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

This chapter provides a brief overview of the features of Rwanda's political, historical, and cultural context that shape and define processes of reconciliation within the four organizations at the center of this study. Despite Rwanda's diminutive size, it has an extremely complex and contended sociopolitical history. To begin with, there are numerous heated debates about the origins of its peoples and pre-colonial relations between its "ethnic groups."<sup>1</sup> While there is less disagreement about Tutsi oppression of Hutu during the colonial era, there are dramatically different interpretations of the events surrounding Rwanda's transition to independence (1959-1962). Conspiracy theories for the murder of President Habyarimana in 1994, and therefore culpability for the 1994 genocide, are the subject of ongoing vitriolic and debate. Still other debates rage over how widespread Hutu participation in the genocide was and what actions taken by Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) before, during, and after the genocide should be accounted for. A number of these debates (e.g., the pre-colonial relationship between Hutu and Tutsi) are fought despite the existence of excellent pre-genocide research on the region that was not viewed through the retrospective lens of genocide. Rwandan and non-Rwandan academics and journalists have been mobilized to support the simplified and inaccurate historical accounts of the RPF-dominated government currently in power in Rwanda, most likely due to Western guilt at not intervening to stop the genocide (Pottier, 2005).

Going into the specifics of the various debates is far beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, only the aspects of most relevance to this study are highlighted, while other less relevant events are mentioned in passing. Despite the valid observation by several observers that since 1994, all of Rwanda's history is presented as if it is a "march toward the disaster of 1994" (Longman, 2004, p. 30), this chapter progresses in a chronological fashion. It begins with the pre-colonial era and continues through to Rwanda today. In order to contextualize the four cases

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<sup>1</sup> Although this study recognizes that the term "ethnicity" is not accurate in regards to groups that share the same language, religion, and culture, the term is employed at times for lack of a better term.

at the center of this study, particular attention is paid to the role of religion throughout Rwanda's history, and to the role of women's groups in Rwanda today. Key events in Rwanda's history are presented in tabular form in Appendix A, which simplifies both extremes of Rwandan debates over historical events and periods.

### Pre-colonial Rwanda

The peoples of Rwanda are of three groups, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Hutu form the majority (between 85 and 90%, depending on the source), the Tutsi a sizable minority (10-15%) and the Twa a very small minority (1%). Their ancestors settled into the Great Lakes region of Central Africa over several thousand years (Schoenbrun, 1998; Chretien, 2003), although the origin and time of arrival of the different groups is a key area of debate. Over time, these groups came to speak a single language (*Kinyarwanda*), although how that came about is rarely discussed in the literature. The three groups developed a common culture and religion, and recognized the authority of a divine king (*mwami*) who was advised by a council of chiefs and diviners (Mamdani, 2001). It is unclear when the inhabitants of the area, who came to be known as *banyarwanda*, came to believe in a common mythical ancestor *gihanga*, whose three descendants were *gahutu*, *gatutsi*, and *gatwa* (Sebarezi, 2010). This myth is presented in different ways in the literature, by turns justifying *gatutsi*'s domination of *gahutu* and *gatwa*, or emphasizing the brotherhood between them.<sup>2</sup> Other myths, legends, proverbs, dances, songs, and beliefs have been shared by all *banyarwanda* up to and beyond the genocide of 1994 (Mamdani, 2001; Newbury, 1988; Semujanga, 2003; Taylor, C., 1999; Des Forges, 1999).<sup>3</sup>

As in much of Africa, *banyarwanda* were organized in groups based on lineage, clan, clientship relations, and by blood pacts. Clans were far more salient as a unit of political

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<sup>2</sup> For example, see Sebarezi (2010) for the first interpretation, and (Gatwa, 2005) for the second (note that Gatwa is the author's name). Gatwa argues that the Tutsi royalty manipulated Rwandan mythology to justify their own domination.

<sup>3</sup> *Banyarwanda* are spread throughout the Central African region and are either identified by a unifying term such as *banyarwanda* or by more specific terms such as *banyamulenge* for the Tutsi of South Kivu Region in the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, even identifying *banyamulenge* as *banyarwanda* is politically tricky.

organization than any notion of ethnicity, i.e. Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa (Newbury, 1988; Mamdani, 2001). In fact, *ethnicity* has never been an appropriate way to describe the differences between these groups, which share the same language, religion, and culture. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were originally terms that had to do with occupation, ownership of cattle, and status (Newbury, 1988); Twa were generally foragers, Hutu cultivators, and Tutsi pastoralists. A Hutu could become Tutsi (*kwihutura*, meaning “to cease being Hutu”), and a Tutsi could become Hutu (*kwitutsira*, or *gucupira*), both movements which had to do with acquisition or loss of wealth and/or intermarriage (Taylor, C., 1999). Such movements indicated fluidity in social status that was present in some but not all regions of pre-colonial Rwanda (Newbury, 1988), and which diminished considerably during the pre-colonial reign of Rwabugiri (Pottier, 2002).<sup>4</sup> Those working further from the earth (i.e. with cattle, as opposed to plants), with liquid diets (i.e. blood and milk) had the highest status, while those working with the earth (i.e., the Twa potters) had the lowest status (Taylor, C., 1999). Neither Tutsi nor Hutu would share eating or cooking vessels with Twa, which remains more or less the case today (Taylor, C., 1999).<sup>5</sup>

The early Rwandan kingdom was one of conquest. It repelled repeated raids by Arab slave traders, denying Islam a foothold in the area, while also fighting to bring the territories of southwestern and northwestern Rwanda under its control (Pottier, 2005; Newbury, 1988; Taylor, C., 1999). These areas strongly resisted coming under the kingdom’s control, a dynamic that continues to exert an effect on Rwandan politics even today. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century *mwami* Rwabugiri (1860-1895) was particularly expansionistic, but did not succeed in suppressing the northwestern territories until he could enlist Germany’s assistance at the very beginning of the colonial era (Vansina, 1962). Considering these wars of expansion, the oft-made argument that Rwanda was a “peaceful” kingdom in the pre-colonial era seems doubtful, although these wars

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<sup>4</sup> Pottier (2005, p. 199) draws on Vidal’s research: “In some areas of Rwanda, including Central Rwanda, transfers of cattle from Tutsi to Hutu were simply unthinkable before the [White Fathers] arrived (Vidal, 1991, p. 34).”

<sup>5</sup> Practices named *kuneena batwa*, forbidding the sharing of cooking, drinking, and eating vessels with the Twa probably pre-dated the colonial era because the colonial powers took almost no interest in the Twa as a group, thus strengthening the case that marginalization of groups preceded the colonial era (Taylor, C., 1999).

were not fought along “ethnic” lines. Hutu and Twa fought alongside Tutsi warriors in these wars of expansion (Mamdani, 2001). Relations between Tutsi on the one hand and Hutu and Twa on the other did see increasing stratification in the pre-colonial era, however. Extensive evidence of this is provided by Newbury (1988) and Vansina (2004).

In areas under the kingdom’s control, the *mwami* (as king) performed vital ritualistic and redistributive acts for the people. His importance as both the creator and blocker of life-sustaining flows was essential to health, well-being, and abundance in the kingdom. However, both pastoralists and cultivators played key roles in buttressing the king’s power, through rituals grounded in agriculturalist practices (Mamdani, 2001; Taylor, C. 1999).<sup>6</sup> Not only a ruler, the king was in service of a larger purpose, and popular legends told of *mwami* who had been human sacrifices in times of misfortune (Taylor, C. 1999). Control over resources was exercised through a set of ties in cross-cutting hierarchies between patrons and clients, but not necessarily in the top-down manner assumed by Africanist scholars of the colonial era (Newbury, 1988).<sup>7</sup> Newbury (1988) provides the definitive work on patron-client relations in Rwanda through her study of a region of southwestern Rwanda that was conquered relatively late in the Rwandan kingdom’s wars of expansion. For example, Newbury describes the shift from *umuheto* to *ubuhake* relations during the time of King Rujugira (1756-65). *Umuheto* entailed the gifting of cattle from client to patron lineages to ensure protection. This was an unequal but roughly reciprocal relationship. As *umuheto* shifted to *ubuhake*, both reciprocity and equality were further diminished because flows of cattle went to individual patrons (rather than lineages), and because the flow of cattle went in the other direction. This made exploitation far more likely (Newbury, 1988).

In a similar vein, control of land tenure moved from lineages (*ubukonde*) to control by the king (*igikingi*), who could assign it to whomever he wished. This latter change is supposed to

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<sup>6</sup> A system of three political chiefs ensured sharing of political power: there was the prefect of the soil (a Hutu), the prefect of the pastures (a Tutsi) and the chief of the army who was either Hutu or Tutsi (Semujanga, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> This is a simplified representation of pre-colonial patron-client relations, which is intentionally kept brief here due to the scope of this work.



have started in the mid-1800s, and certainly led to a decline in the social position of the Hutu (Mamdani, 2001). The role of the land chiefs up to that time had been to collect agricultural tributes, and land chiefs had often been Hutu (Mamdani, 2001). The loss of land rights by the Hutu is thought to have given rise to the detested *uburetwa* (under King Rwabugiri, 1860-1895), a form of “clientship” that only applied to Hutu, whereby manual labor for the local hill chief was performed as payment for occupation of the land (Mamdani, 2001). This polarized the division between Hutu and Tutsi, such that the state of Rwanda became increasingly Tutsi-ruled (Mamdani, 2001). During this same period, status for the Hutu and Twa within the military were undergoing similar diminishment (Mamdani, 2001). Throughout these changes, it is important to note that Hutu consciousness did not arise until the Tutsi elite began to use the state apparatus for their own interests (Newbury, 1988).<sup>8</sup> In fact, some populations considered “Hutu” in retrospect (such as the *bakiga* of northwestern Rwanda) did not think of themselves as “Hutu” until the Rwandan Kingdom brought them under control and assigned them an inferior status (Mamdani, 2001).

Thus, despite the many contentions made by the Rwandan government and its supporters today, there is a good amount of excellent research indicating the Tutsi were already self-conscious, dominant, and “oppressive” to some degree before the arrival of the Germans. After all, despite whatever mobility the Hutu still retained, the *mwami* could only be Tutsi, as is indicated in the Esoteric Code, which laid out the form and content of rituals, rules for succession, naming of kings, and prohibitions on royalty (Newbury, 1988). However, the colonial powers took a somewhat feudalistic system and infused it with racial overtones (Mamdani, 2001), which is described in more detail in the Colonial Era section below. First, a brief summary of traditional religion and Rwandan social relations is provided.

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<sup>8</sup> This is the meaning of the title to Newbury’s book *Cohesion of Oppression* (1988). Her argument is that Hutu came to see themselves as a community only in response to the oppression they faced at the hands of the Tutsi. In fact, during this period, many Hutu left the Rwandan kingdom and moved into what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

### *Traditional Religion*

Although a number of authors write about traditional religion in Rwanda, it is difficult to ascertain how the *ryangombe* (or *kubandwa*) and *nyabingi* religious sects interact with the dominant religion of Rwanda, in which the king was central.<sup>9</sup> Discussion here is limited to the dominant religion of the divine kingship, which was explored by Christopher Taylor (1999) in regards to notions of health in Rwandan culture.<sup>10</sup> According to Taylor (1999), Pre-colonial Rwanda was mostly united under one main religion, in which the king had a direct link with *imaana* (God), and health and well-being for all were mediated through rituals of blockage and flow in which the king was central. He was surrounded by diviners, who not only interpreted signs and omens, but were believed to be able to read the future. Ancestors (*abazimu*) were honored and revered. Various liquids (milk, blood, honey) were sacrificed to appease the ancestors (Taylor, C., 1999). In periods of misfortune, Rwandans would consult a diviner (*umupfumu*) to ascertain what was angering the ancestors. Access to *imaana*, therefore, was gained through the king and through the ancestors, a pattern of intermediation that was later to be replicated by the Catholic Church in the colonial era. Post-genocide Rwanda has seen an intriguing reversal of this pattern, which is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Traditional healers and witches were both common, and the strategies of the latter often involved rituals to either block or clear blockage of flow (of oneself or another, whether that be menstrual flow, milk, or wealth). Poisoning was a method of settling acrimonious disputes or ridding Rwanda of blocking beings, while harmonious relations were shown in the sharing of liquids, such as drinking banana beer out of a calabash with one straw.<sup>11</sup> In another key practice utilizing liquids, blood pacts were performed in Rwanda. This practice would sometimes involve the drinking of another's blood, in order to establish a bond stronger than clan or ethnicity.

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<sup>9</sup> *Kubandwa* has been viewed as a protest of the masses against an established order ruled by a divine king but also as an expression of submission and acceptance of the king (Mamdani, 2001). Rwandans today sometimes mention *kubandwa* as if it was the dominant pre-colonial religion (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>10</sup> The divine kinship in Rwanda is discussed at length by Linden and Linden (1977).

<sup>11</sup> In post genocide Rwanda, accusations and counter-accusations of poisoning are still quite common (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

These bonds were inviolable, and if transgressed would lead to great calamity for the transgressor (Taylor, C., 1999; Kayitare, 1999).<sup>12</sup> Although many Rwandans, especially medical personnel, claim such traditional ideas are no longer important in Rwandan culture (Ranck, 1998), that view is belied by fieldwork data from this study; by a few authors who note stories of traditional healers in post-genocide Rwanda; and by the prevalence of very distinct forms of violence during the genocide, as discussed in the section *Symbolic Violence* below.

### *Rwandan Social Relations*

Whatever the nature of the relations between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, certain aspects of Rwandan culture hold true across the groups. Like African cultures more generally, Rwanda is best viewed through a collectivist lens.<sup>13</sup> According to Kayitare (1999, p. 2), in Rwandan philosophy, “A person out of community is unimaginable... a *munyarwanda* [Rwandan] sees community as a perpetual world of human beings, a historical tree which never dies completely since it gives seeds to regenerate its species.” Rwanda has many proverbs, and the one that captures this sense is: “We dwell where others dwelt, we will leave the place for others who will in turn give up the place for others to dwell.” For Rwandans, *ubumwe* refers to unity or togetherness, where *umwe* means “one person,” and the verb *kuba* means “to become.” By extension, *gushyira hamwe* means “to put together, to strengthen one another in cooperative.” The meaning of this is that there is no “member,” but only “co-members” who are united not necessarily by blood but by *ubumwe* (Kayitare, 1999, p. 3).<sup>14</sup>

A Rwandan expresses him/herself as *mwene naka*, meaning “the son/daughter of so and so.” There are three types of relationship: *ubwoko* (clan), *umuryango* (lineage), and *inzu* (home

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<sup>12</sup> Although few post-genocide authors discuss blood pacts, several persons in this study referred to their blood pacts with others. In one case, a whole family was buried alive by a family they had a blood pact with because the latter could not bring themselves to draw blood in killing them (data from fieldnotes, January, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Collectivism is a term used to describe an emphasis on the interdependence of every human in some collective group and the prioritization of group goals over individual goals Ratner & Lumei (2003). An equivalent term in Rwanda (as in other parts of Africa) is *ubuntu*, which is defined by Desmond Tutu (1999, p. 31) as the notion that my humanity is “inextricably bound up in yours.”

<sup>14</sup> The impact of genocide in such a collectivist culture, where identity and well-being is based on intricate relationships, and where those relations have been eliminated or severely betrayed, is an area of ongoing concern.

or kinship, parents and children). The clan relates initially to a unique eponymous ancestor, and associates one as a series of families united for genealogical or political features (Newbury, 1988; Kayitare, 1999). In Rwanda, clans are not biologically related, and they *are* interethnic (Kimenyi, 1989).<sup>15</sup> A lineage is a group of people with a common ancestor, and therefore intermarriage would be viewed as incest (Kimenyi, 1989). Common kinship is for all of those who were born in the same house and have the same ancestors (Kayitare, 1999). Rwanda is patrilineal and patriarchal; children take on the ethnicity and clan of their father. Polygamy was widely practiced in the past, but is increasingly uncommon (and illegal, under the Rwandan Constitution, 1991/2003).

Producing children in marriage is of fundamental importance to well-being in Rwandan families. The saying that relates to this is: “The counterweight against death is to father/generate” (Kayitare, 1999, p. 3). Rwandans believe that a person can only fulfil himself when he reproduces in his own image, begotten and drawn out from himself (Kayitare, 1999). The most unfortunate person in Rwandan society is a woman or man who cannot produce; they are viewed as “good for nothing,” or cursed (Kayitare, 1999, p. 3; Taylor, C., 1999). “It is unthinkable to be happy for someone who cannot communicate human life to others” (Kayitare, 1999, p. 3). Common greetings exchanged indicate the importance of fecundity. For example, “I wish you to beget” is responded to with “I wish the same for you” (Kayitare, 1999, p. 3). These sayings reflect that “Society exists because there are births” (Kayitare, 1999, p. 3). These beliefs about fecundity are also reflected in the traditional religion of Rwanda, which was discussed previously.

### The Colonial Era (1895-1959)

Germany began its conquest of the area that is present-day Rwanda and Burundi during

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<sup>15</sup> Although many young have forgotten their clans (Kimenyi, 1989), clans are still operative in Rwandan culture, as shown by the current debate about Rwandan political problems being driven by inter-clan conflict. Kagame is purportedly from the *umwega* clan, whereas others from the *abanyiginya* clan. In 2010, there was a debate about the importance of clan in intra-Tutsi conflict within the RPF government.

the 1880s in the “scramble for Africa,” and was awarded the territory at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 (Mamdani, 2001; Taylor, C., 1999). As mentioned previously, Germany assisted king Rwabugiri in gaining control over the resistant regions of the periphery, especially the northwest, and began to administer the colony around the turn of the century (Mamdani, 2001; Taylor, C., 1999). Thus the central region of Rwanda was under the royal court’s control decades before other regions of Rwanda were, and the later regions were incorporated despite prolonged and intense resistance.<sup>16</sup> The German (and later Belgian) colonial authorities, missionaries, anthropologists, and early explorers to the area all noted phenotypical differences between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Tutsi appeared to be tall and slender, with narrower noses and finer features than the Hutu. The Twa were shortest of all, with the simplest of demeanors (Mamdani, 2001).

Crucially, the Tutsi appeared to be “natural rulers” to the Europeans; more refined, noble, civilized, and closer to Europeans in physique and demeanor. Some elite Tutsi saw the benefit of obliging them with distorted mythological accounts of their invasion and conquest of the peoples of Rwanda, which formed the basis for most early accounts of Rwandan history (Lemarchand, 1970; Des Forges, 1999).<sup>17</sup> At this time, Europeans were quite taken with the “Great Chain of Being” theory, whereby Europeans were closer to God and the angels, and Africans occupied a position closer to animals. This theory ranked European intellect and capacity for civilization highest, and everyone else’s lower (Taylor, C., 1999; Mamdani, 2001). Lowest of all in both these theories were the Negroid peoples, who were seen as devoid of civilizing capacities. The Biblical bent to this inferiority was that Africans were believed to be the offspring of the accursed Ham, who laughed at his father Noah’s nakedness (Lemarchand, 1970; Mamdani,

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<sup>16</sup> In areas suppressed later, resistance to the court’s control was resistance to Tutsi domination (Newbury, 1988). In central areas of the Kingdom, Tutsi domination was more of an “interlude” (Mamdani, 2001). Even during the genocide, the killings were begun very late in the historic region of the early kingdom in central Rwanda, which is attributed to this longer pattern of allegiance.

<sup>17</sup> The most important author arguing this point of view was Maquet (1961) assembled his analysis of pre-colonial Rwandan politics entirely from interviews with Tutsi elites from the central region of Rwanda (Newbury, 1988). Maquet’s argument has resurfaced in present-day Rwanda by ill-informed journalists and scholars (Pottier, 2005). It is worth noting that Rwandan myths did claim a sacred origin for the *mwami*, but never a foreign one (Mamdani, 2001). This is an indicator that the Tutsi as a “foreign” group is an idea introduced by the Europeans.

2001; Taylor, C. 1999). However, Egypt presented a problem in this theory, as its advanced civilization could not be explained by anything other than a foreign conquering race. Thus was born the “Hamitic Hypothesis,” whereby the Tutsi (and similar African groups) became whites who had black skin (Mamdani, 2001). They were not seen as true Africans of the Negroid race, but as a Caucasoid race from northeastern Africa (or points further north), a race that had conquered the simple and brutish Hutu and Twa, and instituted a feudalistic state (Mamdani, 2001). This theory of the origins of the people of Rwanda was convincing enough to the Europeans, and to the *elite* Tutsi of the royal court, who already thought they were superior to begin with (Des Forges, 1999). The inferiority of the Hutu and Twa was assumed to be due to the “premise of inequality” whereby they knew and accepted their rightful place in the feudal order (Maquet, 1961).

Thus, the colonial powers created a two-tiered colony, fragmenting the native communities into indigenous colonized and non-indigenous colonized, by socially constructing a civilizing race out of the Tutsi, and ethnicities out of the Hutu and Twa (Mamdani, 2001). Furthermore, the “civilizing mission,” to which European colonizing powers were bound, was easier to manage with the Tutsi in service as a “subject race” through a system of indirect rule.<sup>18</sup> The schools, colonial administration (first German, then Belgian), and the Catholic Church were all organized around these identities (Mamdani, 2001).<sup>19</sup> The system of multiple chieftancies within the court was suppressed, as was the overall power of the court and the *mwami* (Semujanga, 2003). Patron-client relations were steadily reformed into a vertical authoritarian system, eliminating the cross-cutting hierarchies and creating new units of administration, all of them “Tutsified.” This left peasants virtually no recourse in the case of abuse by their overlords, who over time were all elite Tutsi (Newbury, 1988).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The “civilizing mission” was a condition of having a colony, as per the Berlin Conference (Taylor, C. 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Some scholars represent the collaboration between the colonial administration(s) and the Catholic Church as nearly seamless, while others mention cases when they were at odds with each other. The schools under the Belgians provided education in French for the Tutsi, and Swahili for the Hutu. The Hamitic Hypothesis was a mainstay of their education (Mamdani, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> The Belgians decreed that Tutsi alone would be officials of the colony, removing Hutu (and women) from any

Meanwhile the royal court was under increasing pressure to convert to Christianity and promote conversion among their subjects. From the arrival of the Catholic Church missionaries (the “White Fathers”) to Rwanda in February of 1900 (Kayitare, 1999), their primary aim was to evangelize the Rwandan population (Mamdani, 2001). The Church’s efforts to convert Tutsi and Hutu varied over time, depending on where their allegiances were and how the royal court was responding to the pressure to convert to Christianity (Mamdani, 2001; Des Forges, 1999). In general, the Church found it easier to convert the Hutu, while Tutsi royalty was resistant to convert except when doing so could benefit their eroding power base (Mamdani, 2001). This was in keeping with Rwanda’s pre-colonial pattern of religious power being closely aligned with political power (Mamdani, 2001), a pattern that also holds in Rwanda today. When *mwami* Musinga resisted, he was deposed by the Belgians and replaced by his son Rudahigwa, who toed the line on Christianity and also assisted the Belgians in instituting a direct taxation system for which Tutsi administrators would be accountable (Newbury, 1988). With all the social, political, and educational reasons to convert, Rwanda became one of the most Christian countries in the world (estimates vary between 85-95%). Initially, most converts were Catholic, but during later periods, Protestants, Methodists, and many other sects established a presence in Rwanda. These churches were often in heated competition with each other (Gatwa, 2005; Longman, 2010)

Sometime between 1931 and 1933 (sources differ), identification cards were issued to each individual, thus eliminating whatever social mobility still remained up to that point, and fixing “ethnic” identities.<sup>21</sup> These identity cards were carried all the way through independence and up to the genocide of 1994, when they were literally a matter of life and death for hundreds

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positions of power and excluding them from specialized education to prepare for administrative positions (Des Forges, 1999). But this obscures the fact that the majority of Tutsi were no better off than Hutu (Newbury, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> It is often asserted that these identities were determined by how many cattle each person owned. However, Des Forges (1999) argues the procedures for population registration took no account for ownership of cattle, although the tax structures did. Others assert that ethnicity was determined by measurement of body parts (noses, fingers, overall height) but this more closely describes what the colonials did when first arriving in the area. Des Forges (1999) asserts that each Rwandan was asked to simply declare his identity, which would pass from father to children. Some families falsified their identity cards in the post-colonial era as discrimination and violence against Tutsi increased (Gourevitch, 1998; Des Forges, 1999; and data from fieldnotes).

of thousands of Rwandans. Throughout the colonial period, elite Tutsi benefited in many ways from the colonial administration. The degree to which they abused their power is a matter of some renown, as even Hutu who were not alive during the period tell stories of being oppressed by the Tutsi. It seems reasonable to suggest that there was quite a bit of local and regional variation on these abuses, although this is very rarely noted in the literature.<sup>22</sup> It is clear that many Hutu were raised on stories of Tutsi oppression (Malkii, 1995), while others say there were no problems until the 1950s.<sup>23</sup> Although the vast majority of Tutsi were no better off than the masses of Hutu, they at least were not compelled to do communal labor (*uburetwa*) as the Hutu were to increasingly onerous degrees (Newbury, 1988). The Tutsi overlords were given orders by the administration to make the Hutu work, to which they added their own projects for personal gain. Famines in the 1930s are thought to be related to the demands made upon peasants by the two-tiered oppressive structure (Uvin, 1998).<sup>24</sup>

As World War II drew to a close, a worldwide movement towards decolonization and democratization led to increased pressure from the UN on the Belgian colonial administration.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, over time the Catholic Church in Rwanda had been receiving greater numbers of clergy from the Flemish-speaking lower class of Belgian society, who were much more oriented towards social justice (Taylor, C., 1999).<sup>26</sup> Where before the Hamitic Hypothesis had justified Tutsi rule, now the Tutsi were increasingly viewed as oppressors (Taylor, C. 1999), and as foreign invaders (Mamdani 2001) in the eyes of the Europeans. The oppression of the Hutu was

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<sup>22</sup> As already noted, different regions had dissimilar experiences within the kingdom. There was also local variation in participation during the genocide (see Longman, 1995; Fujii, 2009; or Janzen, 2000). It seems plausible there would have been regional (and local) variation in oppression during the colonial era as well.

<sup>23</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2006-2009).

<sup>24</sup> Changes in residence were restricted and new settlements prohibited, so the peasants had only one avenue of escape – to migrate. Thousands migrated out of Rwanda and into Zaire, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi (Newbury, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> Rwanda was under a UN trusteeship, which was managed by Belgium.

<sup>26</sup> The Church had also been more successful in converting the Hutu than the Tutsi. Kayibanda, a Hutu and the future President of the First Republic of Rwanda, was sent to Europe by the Catholic Church to gain experience with Christian Democratic trade unions (Taylor, C., 1999).



now seen as an injustice, and the colonial administration and Catholic Church began to reverse their favoritism to the Hutu.

### The Transition to Independence: 1956-1962

As Belgian allegiances shifted, Hutu gained greater access to the administrative ranks of the colony. This fostered the growth of Hutu elite educated in the seminaries, who formed political parties with Belgian support. There were elections for advisory government councils (the *Conseil Supérieur*) in 1956, but these only served to reinforce Hutu frustration, as the Tutsi elite manipulated these to exclude Hutu at the highest levels (Mamdani, 2001; Newbury, C., 1988). Conservative Tutsi began pushing for independence, so that a post-independence Rwanda would remain under King Rudahigwa's control (Des Forges, 1999). Tutsi nationalists leaning towards socialism were influenced by Lumumba in neighboring Belgian Congo (Taylor, C., 1999). Fearing a potential movement to the left, Belgians increasingly aided the Hutu elite on the rise (Prunier, 1997).

Rudahigwa died under suspicious circumstances in 1959, and was replaced by his conservative and inexperienced brother, Ndahindurwa (Des Forges, 1999; Newbury, C., 1988), stimulating fears among Hutu political parties that he would be manipulated by monarchists.<sup>27</sup> This intensified the drive to the extreme, and moderate parties fell by the wayside as more extreme parties for Hutu emancipation (e.g., PARMEHUTU, Party of the Movement for the Emancipation of Hutu) and Tutsi monarchy (e.g., UNAR, National Union of Rwanda) dominated political discourse (Des Forges, 1999; Lemarchand, 1970). The UNAR pushed for independence first, insisting there was no brotherhood between Hutu and Tutsi, and that Tutsi domination was the "traditional" structure of Rwandan society before colonialism. PARMEHUTU, led by one of the developers of the "Hutu Manifesto" Gregoire Kayibanda (Lemarchand, 1970) pushed for majority governance first, then independence from Belgium (Des Forges, 1999; Mamdani, 2001;

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<sup>27</sup> A matter of some debate and rumor is whether the Belgians actually poisoned Rudahigwa to push power more towards the Hutu.

Lemarchand, 1970).<sup>28</sup> As the Hutu Manifesto is a very important document in this period and in the build up to the genocide in 1994, it is shown in Appendix A. The underlying idea of the manifesto was that Tutsi were foreigners with no rights to political leadership (Mamdani, 2001). Thus, Hutu parties demonstrated for the overthrow of “double colonialism” to the UN visiting mission that was supervising the decolonization process in Rwanda (Newbury, 1988).

The series of violent episodes called the “Hutu Revolution” by many began in November of 1959.<sup>29</sup> This uprising demonstrated the depth of resentment among the Hutu for Tutsi overlords. The Tutsi counterattack was even more severe and the Belgians intervened. The Belgians claimed to have “restored order,” but a number of scholars (e.g., Mamdani, 2001; Newbury, 1988; Des Forges, 1999) argue that the Belgians, under Colonel Guy Logiest, were anything but neutral, and were in fact aiding the Hutu to abolish Tutsi hegemony.<sup>30</sup> Most accounts that go into detail on this matter agree that the Belgians rapidly replaced about half of the Tutsi chiefs with Hutu chiefs, making it possible for Hutu leaders to win the UN-sponsored elections of 1961, along with a referendum leading to the rejection of the monarchy (Lemarchand, 1970; Newbury, 1988; Des Forges, 1999). PARMEHUTU won the largest majority in the legislature, prompting the Tutsi *mwami* and many monarchists to flee the country. The leader of PARMEHUTU, Gregoire Kayibanda, assumed power as President of the Rwandan Republic in October of 1961, and directed the move to independence on July 1, 1962 (Lemarchand, 1970).

### The First Republic under Kayibanda

During the transition to independence, violence had driven many Tutsi into other areas of

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<sup>28</sup> Kayibanda created the party PARMEHUTU based on the principles of the Hutu Manifesto. PARMEHUTU became MDR-PARMEHUTU in 1960 (Linden, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> A subject of much debate is how to view the events of 1959. To many Hutu, the Hutu revolution or the “Social Revolution of 1959” was not against the Belgians, but against the Tutsi. Others call this the beginning of the genocide against the Tutsi (Mamdani, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> This version of events is the reason for the term “assisted revolution” that is sometimes applied to the events of 1959.

Rwanda (especially the relatively wild and unsettled Bugesera) and exile in Uganda, Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania, and beyond (Prunier, 2009). Starting in 1961, some groups among these exiles pushed for a return to the monarchy through a series of raids into Rwanda, for which they were called *inyenzi*, (“cockroaches”) because they raided at night. Kayibanda’s government generally retaliated for these raids by sponsoring pogroms against the Tutsi within its borders, who were assumed to be collaborating with the *inyenzi*, and therefore *ibiyitso*, or “traitors” (Chretien, 2003).<sup>31</sup> Following massacres in 1963, Kayibanda threatened the “complete and rapid termination of the Tutsi race” (Chretien, 2003, p. 268). Although the raids ended by 1967, the attacks against internal Tutsi continued, with an estimated 20,000 killed and another 300,000 forced to flee (Prunier, 1997; 2009), as the regime learned that profit was to be made by appropriating Tutsi land and goods.<sup>32</sup> By 1965, MDR-PARMEHUTU had become the only political party with any power. All of the seats in the National Assembly were held by MDR-PARMEHUTU members, and a large majority of those were southern Hutu. In the presidential elections of 1965, Kayibanda was re-elected with 98% of the vote, and again in 1969 with an unbelievable 99.6% (Reyntjens, 1985). Such margins are typical for post-colonial Rwanda, in the post genocide era as well.

Other than the violence committed against internal Tutsi, discrimination against the Tutsi in all areas of public life was thorough and uncontested during the First Republic. Kayibanda’s regime steadily replaced all the Tutsi and Hutu power-holders with southern Hutu, isolating the northern Hutu. A long process of significant changes in land tenure, particularly the redistribution of Tutsi pasture lands to Hutu landholders, was begun (Mamdani, 2001). As Mamdani (2001) observes, the crucial mistake made by the newly independent Rwanda was in not having transformed the racialized identities shaped by the colonial powers to a new Rwandan

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<sup>31</sup> The charges that internal Tutsi were really aiding the monarchist raiders would continue on into the 1990s when the RPF raids began. The Tutsi inside Rwanda were consistently presented as traitors (Chretien, 1995; Des Forges, 1999) although some internal Tutsi resented the RPF as much as Hutu (Mamdani, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Lemarchand (1970) and Mamdani (2001) say the raids ended in 1964, but Des Forges (1999) also lists 1967 as the end of the raids.

identity. Indeed, not until 1994 were the detested identity cards instituted by the Belgians in 1930s eliminated.

### The Second Republic under Habyarimana

Growing hostility among the northern Hutu, who were excluded in Kayibanda's regime, found its outlet in violence against the Tutsi through the "public safety committees" of 1973.<sup>33</sup> Southern and northern Hutu blamed the other for the violence, and both were probably accountable (Des Forges, 1999). On July 5, 1973, a northern Hutu General named Juvenal Habyarimana took advantage of the disarray during one of these pogrom periods, and took power in a "bloodless coup" promising to restore national unity (Des Forges, 1999).<sup>34</sup> Initially, Habyarimana was less abusive towards internal Tutsi than Kayibanda had been, and many Tutsi felt relieved and hopeful (Sebarenzi, 2009).

Habyarimana's approach to governance was to further centralize power, and specifically in the hands of northern Hutu. In 1975, Habyarimana made Rwanda into a one-party state, in which all Rwandans would be MRND (National Revolutionary Movement for Development) members from birth. The MRND directly appointed *burgomasters* (mayors) who exercised near-total power in the communes.<sup>35</sup> This was a top-down administrative structure, focused on control of the population and weekly mobilization of labor for unpaid public projects (*umuganda*).<sup>36</sup> Rwandan adults were required to participate in weekly "animation" sessions in

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<sup>33</sup> The "public safety committees" of Kayibanda's days (Des Forges, 1999) became the "Civilian Defense Program" of Habyarimana's days (Mamdani, 2001), and it seems the "local defense forces" of post-genocide Rwanda (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>34</sup> Often said to be a bloodless coup, this transition resulted in the execution or death in prison of most of the senior leaders of Kayibanda's regime (Des Forges, 1999). Kayibanda himself was put under house arrest, but it is rumored he was poisoned or starved to death by Habyarimana's people (Taylor, C., 1999). This is still a bone of contention between northern and southern Hutu, but it is underreported in the Rwanda literature.

<sup>35</sup> Pre-genocide Rwanda was formed of prefectures (regions), which were each split into communes (similar to counties) for which each had a *burgomaster* (mayor). Each commune was comprised of varying numbers of cells (about 1000 people each). These have been entirely restructured and sometimes renamed in the post-genocide period. The unit by which most people identify themselves is their hill, as Rwanda is a land of many hills (data from fieldnotes and interviews, 2006-2009).

<sup>36</sup> *Umuganda* was to become a site of sporadic but intense resistance, a commonly overlooked facet of Rwandan resistance to authority (Mamdani, 2001; Uvin, 1998). *Umuganda* continues in present-day Rwanda, where some

which they were obliged to honor Habyarimana and the MRND (Des Forges, 1999). The *Forces Armees Rwandaises* (FAR), especially the Presidential Guard, was increasingly filled with northern Hutu. The upper levels of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church (and Anglican, Baptist, and Protestant churches) were increasingly Hutu either serving in political office or openly supporting the MRND in their congregations (Janzen & Janzen, 2000). Hutu from the northwest were highly disproportionate in Habyarimana's regime, especially friends and relatives of his wife. This small group was referred to by the pre-colonial word *akazu* (or "little house"). Voluntary exit from the *akazu* is not tolerated. Some accuse the current President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, of having his own *akazu*, from which the only exit is exile.<sup>37</sup>

The quota system that restricted Tutsi access to jobs and education effectively restricted non-northern Hutu access as well (Des Forges, 1999). Much of this oppression was not visible, or was simply tolerated, by the West. The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of Rwanda as a model of development with an impressive record of progress in nearly every measure of economic and political success (Mamdani, 2001; Uvin, 1998). Aid from foreign nations flooded into Rwanda, facilitating the construction of a surprisingly good infrastructure for a country at Rwanda's poverty level. Yet the 1980s brought a series of economic shocks, including drought, plummeting prices in the export markets for coffee, and ultimately austerity measures dictated by the IMF (Uvin, 1998).<sup>38</sup> People employed by the state, the army, or parastate enterprises were accumulating wealth, while the majority of Rwandans were desperately poor and becoming poorer (Des Forges, 1999).<sup>39</sup>

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still resent it as *corvee* labor (Burnet, 2005). One can avoid participating in *umuganda*, but only by having an official excuse or by staying out of view during it (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>37</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2006-2009).

<sup>38</sup> Economic stressors, together with the highest population density in Africa, are often cited as contributing (if not primary) causes of the genocide (Uvin, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Taylor (1999) argues that Rwanda transitioned from a "gift" economy to one of "accumulation" from the pre-colonial period onwards, and that such accumulation was viewed as "blockage" in Rwandan cosmology. By this interpretation, the accumulation of wealth by the elite might ultimately have to be rectified in sacrifice of the king, in this case, Habyarimana.

## The Civil War (1990-1994)

During Habyarimana's regime, exiled Tutsi from neighboring countries (especially Uganda) had many times pushed for the right of return to Rwanda, but had been deflected by Habyarimana's claims there was not enough land for them to return (Des Forges, 1999). Not welcome in Uganda, Some of the Ugandan Tutsi joined Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), a guerilla army pitted against Obote's regime. The NRA took advantage of a brief *coup d'etat* deposing Obote, and seized power of Uganda in late 1985. Having benefited from training and leadership positions within Museveni's guerrilla forces, some Ugandan Tutsi went on to form the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1987, with Museveni's support (Chretien, 2003). The RPF was predominantly made up of Tutsi exiles and refugees, and among its senior leadership was Paul Kagame (the future President of Rwanda).<sup>40</sup> The RPF demanded right of return and regime change up until 1990.

The period of Civil War in Rwanda (which runs from October 1990 through the genocide of 1994) has been documented in great detail by Des Forges (1999) and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) investigative team, and therefore much of the following discussion is derived from that work. Further analyses of this period are provided by Reyntjens (1994), Prunier (1997); and Mamdani (2001). The economic stressors of this era are well-documented by Uvin (1998). In short, as Des Forges (1999) argues, there was significant promise of internal political reform before 1990, but the Rwandan Patriotic Front attacked northern Rwanda in October of 1990.<sup>41</sup> Many attacks followed over the ensuing four years, and in fact some northern territory was controlled by the RPF. Habyarimana's strategy after every RPF attack was to scapegoat the internal Tutsi. This strategy backfired in the short term because foreign donors increasingly

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<sup>40</sup> For a detailed account of Paul Kagame's life and the development of the RPF, as well as a discussion of difficult issues in Rwanda today, see Kinzer (2008). Kinzer has since (2011) become even more critical of Kagame and the RPF.

<sup>41</sup> Des Forges (1999) contends that the RPF had reason to believe it could have achieved its stated aims (right of return) peacefully, so attacked in order to attempt to dislodge Habyarimana from power. For their part, Habyarimana's regime also used the attack to shore up its power base and to gain support from Belgium, France, and Zaire (Des Forges, 1999).

pressured him to legalize other parties, which he was forced to do in 1991. Many parties started up during this period, most notably the MDR (Democratic Republican Movement), which was a new version of PARMEHUTU. Also started during this time was the CDR (Coalition for the Defense of the Republic), on the extreme right.<sup>42</sup> In 1992, a coalition government was formed but it excluded the CDR. The MRND (now MRNDD) was forced to surrender some of the state's resources, and control over educational access. A merit-based educational access system was instituted by Agathe Uwilingiyimana, as the new Minister of Primary and Secondary Education (Des Forges, 1999).<sup>43</sup> The MRNDD was threatened by all these changes, and warned people that the RPF would only stand to gain from these divisions between parties.

The scramble for power between parties increasingly meant the perpetration of violence against other parties. The youth wings of parties developed a practice called *kubohoza*, which entailed the forceful recruitment of new party members.<sup>44</sup> The MRNDD then armed and trained its own youth wing, the *interahamwe*, using FAR soldiers.<sup>45</sup> The illegitimate use of public powers for partisan gain led the general population to engage in acts of resistance, such as refusing to pay taxes, taking back land that had been ceded to development projects, and refusal to do obligatory communal labor, *umuganda* (Des Forges, 1999; Taylor, C., 1999).<sup>46</sup> Violence and impunity were increasingly the norm.<sup>47</sup>

In 1992, the coalition government forced Habyarimana to begin negotiating with the RPF in Arusha, resulting in the Arusha Accords of 1992. Habyarimana called them “a scrap of paper”

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<sup>42</sup> The CDR may have been the means by which the MRND conveyed its more extreme views (Des Forges, 1999).

<sup>43</sup> Agathe Uwilingiyimana was a regular target of hate media in the build up to the genocide, and one of the first Hutu to be killed in the genocide. She was found half-naked on her front porch with a bottle shoved into her vagina (Neuffer, 2001; Des Forges, 1999). She apparently had also been raped by political adversaries two years previous (Des Forges, 1999). This speaks to the gendered dimensions of the conflict in Rwanda.

<sup>44</sup> Literally, to “free,” or “liberate” but with a connotation of force to it (Des Forges, 1999). This term was later used to refer to the rape of Tutsi women during the genocide.

<sup>45</sup> Most literally, *interahamwe* means “those who aim at the same target” (Semujanga, 2003), though it is usually translated as “those who fight together” or “those who attack together.”

<sup>46</sup> Rwandans may not always be as compliant and obedient as they are often portrayed in post-genocide analyses.

<sup>47</sup> The proliferation of small arms led to many acts of random violence, which the government invariably blamed on RPF infiltrators. In 1993, an international commission of human rights organizations determined that in fact most of the random violence could be traced to the highest circles of power (Des Forges, 1999).

not long after, due to intense pressure from the military (Des Forges, 1999). Within the army, documents were circulated equating political parties, opposition newspapers, or anyone else dissatisfied with the regime in power with the RPF (even foreigners married to Tutsi women). Enemies were identified by name, which supports the argument that very strong argument that the genocide was planned (Des Forges, 1999).<sup>48</sup>

Meanwhile, liberalization of press freedom had given birth to many new journals, several of them linked directly to Habyarimana's inner circle. The most renowned of these was *Kangura*, which frequently utilized incredibly graphic and politically hateful cartoons for the illiterate.<sup>49</sup> The public radio station, Radio Rwanda, could no longer be Habyarimana's mouthpiece (due to power-sharing), so an alternative radio station was founded in 1992 by various hardliner Habyarimana supporters from the northwest (Des Forges, 1999). This station was called *Radio-Television Libre de Mille Collines* (RTLTM).<sup>50</sup> Des Forges (1999) writes that the hate propagandists utilized two overarching techniques: "created events," and "accusations in a mirror" (imputing to the Tutsi exactly their own malevolent intentions). The messages followed a number of consistent and mutually reinforcing themes, including: the Tutsi as an alien invading race, all Tutsi as RPF supporters, the seduction of Hutu men by Tutsi women, the plans of the Tutsi to wipe out all Hutu, and/or the desire of the Tutsi to rule the Hutu again. Given Rwanda's colonial history, and the dominance of a Tutsi minority over a Hutu minority in Burundi, these were compelling messages to an increasingly frightened populace (Des Forges, 1999).

The government stepped up massacres to further accustom the population to killing Tutsi,

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<sup>48</sup> One of Des Forges' (1999) key accomplishments was in providing abundant evidence of the planning of the genocide. For example, as early as Nov 1992, Mugesera gave a now-famous speech at an MRND meeting, in which he declared that the Tutsi would be sent back to Ethiopia by means of the Nyaborongo River, and that if their throats were not cut, they would kill Hutu.

<sup>49</sup> *Kangura* (to wake them up) was actually a response to a paper begun by a Tutsi businessman named *Kanguka* (to wake up).

<sup>50</sup> Though ostensibly private, RTLTM was given public radio wave access, its power supply came directly from the Presidential Palace (Taylor, C., 1999), and various personalities from Radio Rwanda also spoke on RTLTM, so it is not hard to imagine RTLTM being seen as deeply implicated in government affairs (Des Forges, 1999).



and dozens of “practice slaughters” were perpetrated between 1990 and 1993, most of them in the northwest and Bugesera. In March of 1992, the government used the *interahamwe* for the first time to conduct some of these massacres, and in some cases soldiers were directly involved (Des Forges, 1999). When confronted by international observers about these abuses, the government usually claimed they had been exaggerated, or portrayed them as “tribal” killings. Habyarimana would express seemingly sincere regret about the violence, and then utilize it as a way of garnering more support for the security apparatus. Importantly, there were never any prosecutions or punishment for any parties involved in these killings (Des Forges, 1999).

Meanwhile, all throughout 1992, the government was clearly gearing up for war, if not genocide.<sup>51</sup> The mastermind behind most of these preparations was a military leader named Theoneste Bagosora (who would later be convicted of genocide at the ICTR). It was he who started the Civilian Defense Program (CDP), organized the training of militias, and censored the media, in collaboration with the AMASASU (Alliance of Soldiers Provoked by the Age-old Deceitful Acts of the UNARists).<sup>52</sup> Even Habyarimana was increasingly seen by these extremists as overly willing to collaborate with the RPF (Des Forges, 1999).

On the diplomatic front, 1993 brought several precipitating events. Though the third round of Arusha Accords was signed in January, by February the RPF had violated the cease-fire, displacing many more thousands of people from the north.<sup>53</sup> The attack was suppressed with the help of France, but by now about one seventh of the Rwandan population was internally displaced because of the war, straining limited resources and deepening fear. The extremist CDP gained credibility after this attack, and even the more moderate opposition parties felt betrayed by the RPF. This was the beginning of the unraveling of solidarity among the opposition parties, as it became increasingly difficult to trust or defend the RPF. Habyarimana took advantage of

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<sup>51</sup> The “Civilian Defense Program” armed teachers, government employees, shopkeepers, health workers, etc. Local leaders started compiling lists, especially of those Tutsi whose children had left the country.

<sup>52</sup> As described previously, the UNAR is the old monarchist party from the independence era. And *amasasu* in *Kinyarwanda* means “bullets.”

<sup>53</sup> Des Forges (1999) suggests that the RPF probably took this action to force progress on negotiations, rather than the stated aim, which was to halt massacres of Tutsi that had occurred over a week earlier.

this growing rift by trying to drive wedges between members of the opposition parties, and various assassinations occurred on all sides (Des Forges, 1999).

Despite France's ongoing support of Habyarimana's regime, by the time Habyarimana returned to Arusha in July of 1993, even France had joined the World Bank and donor nations in threatening to withdraw international funds if the treaty was not signed by August. Habyarimana finally complied on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1993. This news was greeted very positively by the public, but extremely negatively by the military. The integration of the armed forces would entail demobilization for up to 20,000 FAR soldiers. *Burgomasters* and *prefects* (the heads of the prefectures) also stood to lose from the Arusha Accords, which would require sharing of these posts with representatives from the RPF. The hardliners, esp. CDR, forecast more bloodletting as the likely result. Bagosora scorned the Hutu who signed the Accords (one has to suppose this included Habyarimana), calling them "house Hutu." Even moderates felt the RPF had been given too much, which might embolden them to push for more power in the transitional period (Des Forges, 1999).

One condition of the Arusha Accords was the augmentation of the UN peacekeeping force (UNAMIR), to ease the transition to power-sharing, but this was several months late in arriving, and ill-equipped once it arrived. The main funder was the US, already resistant to its growing peacekeeping involvement in regions of little strategic interest, such as the recent failed mission in Somalia. The way the US saved money in Rwanda was to diminish the force size, its equipment, and its mandate (Des Forges, 1999).

Perhaps Rwanda would have weathered this growing storm, but in October, 1993, the Tutsi-led army of Burundi killed their newly elected Hutu President, sparking the worst fears of the Rwandan Hutu population. Burundi had seen many decades of Tutsi rule despite its being a majority Hutu state. Every time the Hutu had tried to gain power previously, the Tutsi-led army had squashed their efforts (most notably with the massacre of up to 100,000 Hutu in 1972, and the flight from Burundi of hundreds of thousands of Hutu, who became refugees in Tanzania and Rwanda). Finally a Hutu named Ndadaye had been elected in Burundi, in elections that were

widely seen as free and fair. He was a moderate, and had named a Tutsi Prime Minister. Unfortunately, he had left the Tutsi-dominated army untouched (Des Forges, 1999).<sup>54</sup> Even the moderates in Rwanda found it a hard to trust the RPF or the regional Tutsi diaspora after this, and many abandoned their parties to join the MRNDD, or formed “power” versions of their own parties. Thus, the MDR split into the MDR-Power and MDR-moderate (Mamdani, 2001; Des Forges, 1999). To be a moderate in Rwanda was becoming very unsafe. Again the international community did not convincingly demand punishment of Ndadaye’s killers, only reinforcing a culture of impunity (Des Forges, 1999). Additionally, the killings in Burundi drove 300,000 Hutu refugees into Southern Rwanda, an extremely angry and dispossessed population from which was drawn more recruits for the militias of Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999). Thus, the movement known as “Hutu Power” was “built on the corpse of Ndadaye” (Des Forges, 1999). Habyarimana was in a precarious position, as a signatory to the Arusha Accords. Further arming and training of the civilian population continued into 1994, and the RTLM intensified its messages of hate and upcoming cleansing. Meanwhile, the RPF secretly brought more fighters and guns into Kigali to augment its UN-sanctioned force of 600.

The assassination of President Habyarimana and the new President of Burundi on April 6, 1994 was the final stressor.<sup>55</sup> There are several parties that may have killed Habyarimana, and a definitive answer has (inexplicably) not been sought out by the international community. The extremists may have seen Habyarimana as a traitor. The fact that roadblocks were set up nearly concurrently with the assassination seems to reflect this possibility (Des Forges, 1999). But the RPF were also making strategic moves right before the assassination, and they may have preferred a military victory over the slow grind of the Arusha Accord process.

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<sup>54</sup> The RTLM reports of Ndadaye’s murder spoke of torture, mutilation, castration, and importantly, of him being impaled by a spear from anus to mouth (Taylor, C., 1999).

<sup>55</sup> The weaponry used to bring down Habyarimana’s plane would have required sophisticated skills, but any of the military parties to the conflict would have been able to obtain them (Des Forges, 1999). This was confirmed to me by American military personnel in Rwanda in late 2006.

## The Rwandan Genocide (April-July, 1994)

With Habyarimana and his chief of staff dead, and the minister of defense out of country, Bagosora assembled a meeting of top military leaders.<sup>56</sup> Discussions for a peaceful transition were the supposed business, but in fact the Presidential Guard and national police were already doing the opposite throughout the city. The first objective was to kill the opposition party Hutu and any other Hutu who might have legitimately governed (Des Forges, 1999). Detailed lists of those Hutu had already been assembled, so that objective was mostly complete by the morning of April 7. Also killed on April 7 were 10 Belgian peacekeepers guarding Agathe Uwilingiyimana.<sup>57</sup> Roadblocks were quickly set up all over Kigali, and people were told to remain in their homes. The only source of information was the radio, which played Mozart's requiem for hours on end (Taylor, C., 1999). A power struggle ensued among military leaders, but Bagosora ultimately won because of his control over the Presidential Guard, the strongest armed force in the country (Des Forges, 1999). There was even some talk of ousting Bagosora between the RPF, UNAMIR and Bagosora's opposition, but the Hutu opposition couldn't bring themselves to cooperate with the RPF and banked their hopes on UNAMIR (Des Forges, 1999).

The small UN force in Rwanda at the time had no mandate to intervene in the killings, so UN soldiers stood by while massacres were clearly being committed. When the Belgian peacekeepers were killed, the international community withdrew its support from the mission in a series of denials, avoidances, and diversions, leaving about 250 men on the ground with no mandate to intervene. The international diplomatic and aid community was evacuated quickly, often abandoning desperate Tutsi to be killed in their wake (Dallaire, 2003; Melvern, 2004; Power, 2002; Uvin, 1998; Taylor, C., 1999; Des Forges, 1999).

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<sup>56</sup> Romeo Dallaire was the commander of the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). His book *Shake Hands with the Devil* (2003) refers to a meeting with the men who led the genocide. In retrospect, he agonized over whether he should have just killed them all there.

<sup>57</sup> The *genocidaires* rightly believed that the international community would lose interest in UNAMIR if they incurred losses of their own soldiers, and indeed the diminishment of the UNAMIR contingent directly followed from this incident (Des Forges, 1999).

At first the killing was largely political, but as political adversaries were eliminated, Bagosora turned to eliminating the Tutsi en masse. To enlist more Hutu in the killing, the *genocidaires* (“perpetrators of genocide” in French) needed to cut any ties between Hutu and Tutsi, and to promote the idea of duty in the killing, all of which they did through Radio Rwanda and RTLM. The RPF conveyed the opposite message over its own radio station, promoting the idea that the killings were based on political identities rather than ethnicities (Des Forges, 1999). RTLM just countered this strategy with a direct lie about the senior leadership of the RPF (a Hutu and a Tutsi) killing each other (Des Forges, 1999). The killing was centrally directed by military leaders and *interahamwe* militia but also managed by the *burgomasters*, who were given implicit and explicit messages to continue the killings already started in Kigali. There were two kinds of killings (Des Forges, 1999): that of specific individuals and that of Tutsi as a group. RTLM was directly involved in coordinating killings of specific people, providing both names and addresses for them. Many were killed as a direct result of RTLM announcements, and others were pursued until their names could be crossed off the list (Des Forges, 1999).

As many fled to churches, schools, government offices, stadiums, and hospitals, the *genocidaires* learned it was easier to encourage them to go there first, allow the places to fill, and then to slaughter them.<sup>58</sup> Although many such sites were killing grounds, there are also some stories of people being saved by courageous Hutu. Some were even saved by military members. For example, Colonel Bavugamenshi saved over 10,000 at Cyangugu (Des Forges, 1999). Many thousands were killed at roadblocks that were set up on nearly every road, path, and side street. Hutu who did not have their identity cards and looked Tutsi were often killed, while Tutsi who looked Hutu were sometimes allowed to pass. The rest were killed in homes, public squares, streets, and swamps where they were hiding. Many thousands were tossed into the Nyaborongo River, and others were thrown into pit latrines. In general, bodies were left wherever they fell,

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<sup>58</sup> Gourevitch’s (1998) popular (if historically inaccurate) account entitled, *We Wish to Inform You Tomorrow We Will be Killed with Our Families* is based on a letter written by a father to the pastor of the church he had taken refuge in with his family. The pastor arrived the next day to commence the killing.

contrary to Rwandan tradition, although some mass graves were dug during the genocide (Des Forges, 1999). Although there were various sites of resistance (e.g., Bisesero), the number of killers and their weaponry far outnumbered those who could fight, and survivors were living on little food or water.

Within about 100 days, between 500,000 and 1.3 million people were killed, although there is quite a bit of debate over the number, with the RPF-led government tending to inflate it and the former *genocidaires* hiding in DRC deflating it. The Rwandan genocide had the highest killing rate of any genocide ever recorded, which is more notable for the fact that it was perpetrated with relatively inefficient means. The majority of people were killed with machetes, clubs, spears, and other simple tools; by their neighbors, friends, priests, teachers, family members, business leaders, and mayors (Des Forges, 1999). In most areas, it was required that any Hutu man be killing if he did not want to be killed himself. Even cultivation ground to a halt during the genocide, as Hutu were called to the “work” of killing every day. Some Hutu did manage to save Tutsi, but many who were not willing to kill were forced to do it (Hatzfeld, 2005; Des Forges, 1999). Enforcement was made easier by killing those who would not kill, thus bringing the reluctant into line. Still others would hid Tutsi, but only for personal gain.

It is important to note, although the point is often lost in the debate, that there were significant regional and class variations in Hutu participation in genocide against Tutsi. Several researchers have done comparative studies that begin to show how social dimensions other than ethnicity are at work. For example, Longman (1995) contrasts the genocide in two different communities, finding significant differences between them in terms of class and orientation to social justice. Fujii (2009, p. 77) also explores two communities and finds that “situational factors and personal motives, such as greed and jealousy” played a greater part than ethnic hatred. Janzen (2000) does similarly, contrasting the importance of leadership and community strength in two different locations. And of course Des Forges and her team of investigators (1999), who conducted intensive study of the genocide for five years, have noted variations in killing patterns that indicate there is more than ethnicity at work in many Rwandan communities.

Furthermore, despite the current government's claims to the contrary, there were many Hutu who did not participate or who actively protected Tutsi. This is shown in publications such as *Tribute to Courage* by African Rights (2002), which tells the stories of quite a number of Hutu who intervened to save Tutsi. It is also shown in so many stories of survival, in this research project and others, that hinge on Hutu actions. Nevertheless, some stories of Hutu betrayal are so alarming and so contrary to any moral code that more attention has been paid to them. Among these are the stories of church leaders participating in genocide. Because Christian organizations are a focus of this research, the role of the churches and church leaders in the genocide is discussed next.

### *Involvement of the Churches*

The participation of church leaders and Christians more broadly in the genocide has been a matter of extensive critique, soul-searching, and profound shame among Christians (Van 'T Spijker, 1999). Many of the biggest massacres took place in churches (Longman, 2010; Rittner, Roth, & Whitworth, 2004; Des Forges, 1999). It is widely accepted among scholars that the churches were so complicit because they were highly integrated into hierarchies of state power (Des Forges, 1999; Gatwa, 2005; Longman; 2010; Cantrell, 2009).<sup>59</sup> In general, the more centralized churches (Catholic, Anglican, and Baptist) served the hierarchies of power, while the less centralized churches and mosques did not (Janzen, 2000).<sup>60</sup> The largest denomination in Rwanda before the genocide was the Roman Catholic Church, and President Habyarimana was a devout follower. But the Rwandan Catholic Church had resisted the liberalizing reforms of Vatican II, which were not consistent with its ethnicist ideology.<sup>61</sup> For example, when called to

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<sup>59</sup> While a disproportionate number of priests and nuns in the Catholic Church in Rwanda were Tutsi, at the highest levels of leadership, they were all Hutu. These Hutu were sometimes leaders in the MRND, or were still beholden to the MRND in various ways (Des Forges, 1999).

<sup>60</sup> Rwandans often say that "nobody was killed in a mosque," but some killings in mosques are reported in Des Forges (1999).

<sup>61</sup> During the genocide many statues of holy figures were often mutilated because of their resemblance to the Tutsi (Janzen, 2000; Neuffer, 2001).

mediate the dispute between the RPF and the government, Rwandan Catholic leadership concluded that the RPF was to blame (Rittner et al, 2004; Longman, 2010) and that massacres of Tutsi were small compared to massacres of Hutu (Mamdani, 2001).<sup>62</sup>

However, there are a number of documented cases of Christians who did intervene to stop the killing or to save Tutsi, at grave risk to their own lives. Many of these people are not alive to tell their stories, but some stories are recounted by Rutayisire (1995), Rittner et al (2004), Janzen and Janzen (2000), African Rights (2002), Gatwa (2005), and Longman (2010).<sup>63</sup> Although people intervening to help the Tutsi were of all denominations, Longman (2010), Rutayisire (1995) and Gatwa (2005) argue that a disproportionate number of these people were *abarokore* (“the saved”), reflecting the evangelical movement begun in the Anglican Church in Rwanda in the 1930s, which had spread throughout East Africa and therefore is known as the “East African Revival” (EAR). The movement had been renewed again in the 1980s within the Protestant churches in Rwanda, with influences from the EAR and American charismatic and fundamentalist churches (Longman, 2010). Importantly for this study, at the basis of this movement is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It took many forms: for example, in the Catholic Churches, it came as “Charismatic Renewal” from the US in the 1970s (Longman, 2010). These revivals drew in thousands of Rwandans, and “challenged the monopoly on the religious authority of the clergy.” In a country where the divine kingship and the Catholic Church had always put an intermediary between persons and God, the notion of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is nothing short of transformative. *Abarokore* were far more willing to speak with a prophetic voice about the darkening of Rwandan affairs (Gatwa, 2005),

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<sup>62</sup> Whether responsibility for the genocide applies to the Vatican or Protestant world churches is a matter of debate. Pope John Paul II had ordered the Rwandan Catholic clergy to cut their explicit political ties after his visit in 1990 (Mamdani, 2001; Taylor, C., 1999) and he called the killing a genocide long before foreign leaders would. He issued several entreaties for a stop to the violence (reprinted in Rittner et al, 2004). However, Mamdani (2001) holds the Vatican responsible for its historic role as “original ethnographer” in producing racialized identities during colonialism; in nurturing identity politics during the transition to independence; and in failing to condemn the murderous actions of the Rwandan state.

<sup>63</sup> This study confirms many cases of persons who intervened to save others, and their Christian belief is almost always cited as a reason for their actions.



but did not engage sufficiently with the structures of power to drive real change in the direction of the country (Rutayasire, 1995).

Some explain the participation of so many Christians in the genocide by arguing that widespread conversions in Rwanda had had minimal impact on Rwandan society, that in effect the Church “attracted many members for social and economic reasons without significantly shaping their beliefs” (Van Hoywegan, as cited in Longman, 2010, p. 9).<sup>64</sup> According to this argument, the churches reflected rather than shaped Rwandan society, as Christian symbols were adapted to Rwandan culture. Kayitare (1999, p. 7) argues the very opposite, noting that the Catholic Church (being the earliest to arrive) had failed to take traditional religion into account: “The first Western Christian missionaries...pretended to preach to people without any religious background or even without [any] soul and they [treated] Christian preaching as building on a naked cultural ground.” Before Christianity came to Rwanda, there was already a widespread and deep belief in God as the master of human life, as the Almighty and the Savior, and for that reason, Rwandans readily adopted Christianity without truly being evangelized. For example, Kayitare (2009) provides many examples of central teachings in Rwandan traditional religions, especially *kubandwa*, that were very similar to Christian teachings, including: the myth of creation; the notion of heaven and earth; a woman at the origin of death; the breakdown of relationship between man and God; the role of the snake in the source of human mortality; and even the sacrifice of the good being (akin to Jesus) on the limbs of a tree that even today in Rwanda is never used. That Christian teachings were adopted without really “reaching to the heart” is reflected perhaps nowhere better than in the types of violence perpetrated during the genocide, which is discussed next.

### *Symbolism and Violence*

Certain forms of violence during the genocide had what Taylor (1999) argues were

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<sup>64</sup> Longman (2010) cautions that this argument in effect absolves the Christian churches of complicity in the genocide. He argues that the “Christian message received in Rwanda was not one of ‘love and fellowship,’ but one of obedience, division, and power” (p. 10).

structured logics to them, which were improvised from earlier structures. These included: impaling of persons from anus to mouth or from vagina to mouth; evisceration of pregnant women; forced incest between parents and children; forced cannibalism of family members; severing of Achilles tendons (of Tutsi and cows); emasculation of men; and breast ablation.<sup>65</sup> These are cultural “hieroglyphics” which harken back to the pre-colonial era when a *mwami* was responsible for assuring the flow of liquid and well-being throughout the kingdom. In fact, the king was sometimes represented as a lactating being (Taylor, C., 1999). When he became a blocking being, or could not perform his role of redistributing wealth appropriately, he was sacrificed. Blocking beings more generally (e.g., women who could not give birth) or those who were enemies of the *mwami* were killed in times past, as it was believed they compromised the well-being of the kingdom. Taylor (1999) argues that the impunity with which so many opponents of the Rwandan presidents have been killed is a reflection of these earlier patterns (Taylor, C., 1999). Furthermore, Taylor argues, the preponderance of roadblocks during the genocide, being far more than was necessary to contain the population, reflected the power to obstruct flow and to rid the state of obstructing beings. The disposal of bodies in the Nyaborongo River and in latrines throughout the country also reflects this internal preoccupation with blockage and flow, for rivers are organs of elimination, “excreting” the blocking beings, and of course latrines are where the blockage (scat) goes (Taylor, C., 1999).<sup>66</sup>

Taylor (1999) would not go so far as to suggest these underlying logics are the *cause* of the genocide, but rather that they help us understand the meaning that underlies these events. These meanings do not work outside of political reality, but with it, for pragmatism and symbolism are not in conflict. Killing as many as you can is consistent with killing in a symbolic way, Taylor argues. As Semujanga (2003) also argues, although the king and the

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<sup>65</sup> The genocide memorial in Nyamata displays a woman who was impaled anus/vagina to mouth in a glass-walled crypt. Representations of the assassination of President Ndadaye (of Burundi) in the newspaper *Kangura* showed him impaled in this manner also.

<sup>66</sup> Many Tutsi survivors and their Hutu perpetrators say they had “no problems” with the other until the killings (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009). It would seem that viewing and killing a Tutsi as a “blocking being” on a subconscious level would not require hatred for that particular Tutsi.

monarchy were no longer outwardly central to Rwandan conceptions about their leader, in fact they were still there through internalized technologies of power (Foucault, 1977) in the form of the president and his power. The killing of the president, and the pursuant sacrifice of the Tutsi, can thus be seen as a massive ritual of purification based on the generative scheme of flow and blockage (Taylor, C., 1999).

Action in accordance with these meaning schemes would not normally be conscious, but of the deeply internalized “goes without saying” quality that Bourdieu (1977) names. Although RTLM and central authorities did exhort the population to kill and torture in a number of very specific ways, assuming that Rwandans did so only because of such exhortations ignores Rwandans’ agency and elides the importance of the existence of these meaning schemes among the elite. Furthermore, in areas other than the forms of violence, it seems clear that at least some pre-colonial logics are *consciously* at work in Rwanda and that Rwandans will admit that is the case if they are comfortable doing so. Some Rwandans still seek traditional healers alongside Western therapies (Ranck, 1998). Followers of the *ryangombe and nyabingi* sects still exist in parts of Rwanda, although they are somewhat secretive (Adekunle, 2007; Burnet, 2005). Veneration of ancestors is still quite common, and traditional ceremonies for wedding ceremonies and funerals often occur alongside more modern or civil ceremonies.<sup>67</sup> The participants in this particular study also confirmed the presence of traditional healers, witches, and cults; ancestor worship; blood pacts; and poisoning in post-genocide Rwanda, although it was not the aim of this project to seek these out. Yet the importance of these was more often than not denied or lightly laughed off.

### The Transitional Period

There is certainly no question raised here about whether there was genocide in Rwanda in 1994, or that the vast majority of its victims were Tutsi. However, it is important to note that the genocide was contiguous with the civil war, which started in 1990. In fact, even after the RPF

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<sup>67</sup> Many Rwandans have three wedding ceremonies; traditional, civil, and Christian.

stopped the genocide, the conflict continued within Rwanda, flooded over into Zaire (now the DRC), and eventually developed into an insurrection in the northwest region of Rwanda. Thus, the period previous to the first elections in Rwanda (2003) is treated here as “the transitional period.” Critical events within that period are the victory of the RPF; the establishment of RPF control; interventions in Zaire; and the insurgency in the northwest.

### *RPF Victory (1994)*

Throughout Rwanda, the genocide ended as the RPF gained territory, first in the east moving southward, and then westwards. As the RPF gained territory, they stopped some massacres from happening (HRW, 1999), while the Hutu fled to Tanzania, Zaire and the *Zone Turquoise*, where France had been empowered by the UN Security Council to set up a safe zone on June 22, 1994 (Prunier, 1997).<sup>68</sup> Up to two million Hutu (and some Tutsi) fled to Zaire with the *genocidaires*, for fear they would be killed or because the *genocidaires* coerced them into fleeing with them (Prunier, 1997).<sup>69</sup> This refugee flow into Zaire stimulated a very belated humanitarian response, and a number of refugee camps were quickly set up in the North and South Kivu regions of Eastern Zaire (Des Forges, 1999; Prunier, 2009). Meanwhile, back in Rwanda, after having taken Kigali on July 4, the RPF declared a unilateral ceasefire on July 18, 1994.

There is no dispute that the RPF ended the genocide while the international community stood by. The UN forces promised during the Arusha Accords were shamefully diminished during the genocide (despite the pleas of Romeo Dallaire), and only arrived after the RPF had declared victory (Prunier, 1997; Power, 2002). Several authors analyze the West’s indefensible

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<sup>68</sup> France’s stated goal was to stop the killing, but many observers admit it was also to stop the RPF advance (e.g., Burnet, 2005; Prunier, 1997; Des Forges, 1999). The desire to stop an Anglophone rebel army from unseating the government of a French-speaking country is generally credited for France’s role in training and supporting the genocidal regime. Although many thousands of lives were saved by *Zone Turquoise* (Des Forges, 1999), the French assisted many known *genocidaires* in their flight to Zaire (Prunier, 1997; Des Forges, 1999).

<sup>69</sup> For example, there are some accounts of women who left with men they had been forced to “marry” during the genocide, as these women knew well they would be killed by the RPF (Twagiramariya & Turshen, 1998; Burnet, 2005). Other Tutsi had falsified documents to save their lives during the genocide, which turned against them when the RPF arrived (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

inaction in minute detail (e.g. Power, 2002; Dallaire, 2003; Des Forges, 1999; Barnett, 2002; Melvern, 2004), which will not be repeated here. However, some authors note, one should not assume the RPF's only goal was to end the killing of Tutsi. The RPF's main mission was to win the war which was reflected in its military strategy of methodically taking the east first, then sweeping westward (Reyntjens, 1999; Lemarchand, 1998). On the way, RPF soldiers took part in many indiscriminate killings and extrajudicial executions (Amnesty International, 1997; Des Forges, 1999). Although many Rwandans tell stories of being saved by the RPF, many others say the RPF made no distinction between Hutu and Tutsi, assuming anyone still living was a Hutu accomplice (Des Forges, 1999; data from interviews, 2006-2009). In particular, women who had effectively hidden, or who had already been raped by Hutu during the genocide were then raped by RPF soldiers (Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998). The RPF has repeatedly blamed these killings on the undisciplined few, and has even punished a few of them (Sebarenzi, 2010), but there is strong evidence that the patterns of killing indicate direction from higher ranks (Des Forges, 1999).

#### *Establishment of RPF Control (1994-1996)*

On July 19, 1994, the victorious RPF swore in a transitional government in Kigali. To the relief of many internal and external observers (Burnet, 2005), the RPF adhered to the Arusha Accords, despite exceptional circumstances that might have given them cause to dismiss the Arusha Accords. However, the RPF designated all previous MRND and CDR posts for itself, and created a vice presidency for Kagame, who was reluctant to directly take power (Prunier, 1997). The new cabinet was majority Hutu and the interim President was a well-known northern Hutu, Pasteur Bizimungu. The Prime Minister, also a Hutu, was Faustin Twagiramungu (Prunier, 1997).

It would be hard to overstate the problems faced by Rwandan government during this period. Most of the buildings and public property had been destroyed or stolen, including the government's monetary reserves (Burnet, 2005). What public services there had been before the

genocide (water, electricity, health care, transportation sector, and so on) were completely out of commission, with many of the professionals and civil servants dead or in exile. Crops were quite literally rotten in the fields with nobody to harvest (Prunier, 1997). And the social fabric had been utterly devastated by the extremely local and personal nature of the violence (Burnet, 2005). Rwandans often refer to themselves during this period as *bapfuye buhagozi* (“the walking dead”).<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, Rwandans who had been living in exile (mostly Tutsi, and referred to as “old caseload returnees”) were returning. Some of them had never lived in Rwanda before, and returned to find dead bodies in the streets.<sup>71</sup> Finding houses abandoned everywhere, they often took whatever houses they wanted (Prunier, 1997).<sup>72</sup> African Rights (1996) reports a number of cases of people killed or wrongly imprisoned for claiming their properties back. *Zone Turquoise* was closed on August 21, 1994, thus precipitating another mass movement of Hutu into Zaire, as rumors of RPF killings circulated (Prunier, 1997).

During this period, ostensibly in an effort to suppress perceived internal threats, the RPF committed a number of massacres and summary executions in eastern, central and southern Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999). African Rights (1996) documents many of these killings as attempts to silence both Hutu and Tutsi witnesses to RPF atrocities. Although the RPF was very effective at keeping foreign observers out of regions where such killings were occurring (HRW, 1999), Human Rights Watch, UNHCR, Medecins Sans Frontieres, and troops with UNAMIR II reported many cases of such killings (Burnet, 2005). For example, up to 8,000 people were massacred in front of international peacekeepers at Kibeho (Pottier, 2002; Burnet, 2005).<sup>73</sup> Another massacre in Kanama (also in front of peacekeepers) happened in 1995, and the

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<sup>70</sup> I’ve heard this expression from several Rwandans, as have other authors (e.g., Nueffer, 2001).

<sup>71</sup> There were up to 600,000 old caseload returnees living in Uganda alone (Reyntjens, 1994; Prunier, 1997) and more in Burundi, Zaire, and Tanzania. The Rwandan government estimated that by end of 1997, 800,000 old caseload returnees had returned home (HRW, 2001), but this number is probably overstated (Burnet, 2005).

<sup>72</sup> Two people interviewed for this study spoke of being asked by Tutsi returnees, “Where are the houses where the rich people lived?”

<sup>73</sup> Burnet (2005) analyzes the government’s attempts to first deny the massacre at Kibeho, then to blame it on the *interahamwe*, then to claim only 200+ had died there.

international community started to take notice (Burnet, 2005). Hutu in the coalition government began to protest and, fearing for their lives, many of them fled in 1995, including Prime Minister Twagiramungu (MDR party leader) and Seth Sendashonga (Interior Minister and member of the RPF). Sendashonga was eventually assassinated in Nairobi after several botched attempts (Sebarenzi, 2009; 2010). It became apparent that although Hutu held the higher positions, it was the Tutsi below them that held the power (Reyntjens, 1995b; Sebarenzi, 2010). The human rights situation deteriorated further in 1995, resulting in arbitrary arrests and assassinations. In December of 1995, the government ordered more than 30 international NGOs to leave the country (Burnet, 2005).

#### *Interventions in Zaire (1996-1997)*

As mentioned briefly above, the international community had done nothing to help Rwandans during the genocide, but responded immediately to the refugee crisis unfolding in neighboring Zaire (African Rights, 1994; Prunier, 2009). Setting up multiple camps for Hutu refugees in Zaire, the humanitarian community unwittingly allowed the *genocidaires* to reorganize themselves in the same administrative units they had had in Rwanda, thus reinforcing the structure of the genocidal government (Burnet, 2005). The Rwandan government increasingly perceived the camps in Zaire as a threat, and many times invited the refugees to return to Rwanda. However, Hutu leaders coerced or frightened many Hutu into staying, telling them the RPF was killing and imprisoning anyone who returned to Rwanda (Umutesi, 2000). The extremists in the camp steadily armed themselves, launching raids into Rwanda and into Tutsi communities in Zaire (Burnet, 2005).<sup>74</sup>

Because of the increasing instability caused by the refugee camps, the Zairian armed forces and several other militia groups started attacking *banyarwanda* in Zaire. Some of the

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<sup>74</sup> The North and South Kivu regions of Zaire had about four times as many Hutu as Tutsi in them (HRW, 1997), as indeed I observed living in North Kivu in the early 1990s. Hutu were generally economic refugees from Rwanda (Newbury, 1988), whereas Tutsi had typically fled violence and or political repression, as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *banyamulenge* are Tutsi who have lived in South Kivu for many generations (Prunier, 2009).

*banyarwanda* then joined the RPA (Rwandan) army, eventually becoming the AFDL and taking over all of Zaire.<sup>75</sup> The AFDL (rightly perceived as Rwandans by the refugees in the camp) attacked multiple refugee camps in late 1996 and early 1997 (UNHCR, 1997; HRW, 1997; Umutesi, 2000). Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans fled back to Rwanda after these attacks but hundreds of thousands more fled to the West, into the jungles of Zaire.<sup>76</sup> Umutesi (2000) offers a harrowing account of the survival of Rwandan refugees in Zaire, which is unfortunately rarely mentioned in books or studies of the Rwandan genocide. As Burnet (2005) argues, hundreds of thousands of Hutu have been traumatized by what they have seen in Congo, yet any mention of their suffering is suppressed by the current government of Rwanda.<sup>77</sup>

#### *Insurgency in the Northwest (1997-1999)*

Due to the return of hundreds of thousands of “new caseload returnees” in 1996 and 1997, the security situation in Rwanda had deteriorated enough for the UN and many international agencies to restrict all travel outside Kigali. Whole regions of the country (especially the northwest) became inaccessible for foreign observers (UNHRFOR, 1997). *Genocidaires* who had been in refuge in Zaire started attacking people inside Rwanda in 1997, touching off a counter-insurgency by the government of Rwanda. Thousands of unarmed civilians were killed by both sides, typically genocide survivors by the *genocidaires* and suspected infiltrators by the government (Amnesty International, 1997). Knowing full well that the insurgents were basing their attacks out of eastern Congo, Rwanda entered into another

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<sup>75</sup> For excellent coverage of the Congo wars, see Prunier, 2009.

<sup>76</sup> Tanzania also started forcing the refugees to go home in December 1996. As Hutu refugees returned to Rwanda, they were typically processed before even arriving home, and many of them were imprisoned immediately (Burnet, 2005). The problems faced by Hutu refugees and returnees are powerfully described by Drumta (1998).

<sup>77</sup> During this study, there were many interactions with Hutu who had returned from Congo, and without exception they mentioned that period as “beyond words,” “like going to hell,” or “things no person should ever see.” For further information about abuses in Zaire/Congo, see the UNHCR’s reports (1997; 2010). The latter has been extremely controversial because it provides compelling evidence that Rwandan forces committed acts of genocide in the DRC.



military engagement in Congo in 1998, this time with Uganda (Reyntjens, 2009).<sup>78</sup> Incursions into the Congo were effective in disrupting the insurgency, as was relocating much of the population of the northwest into camps. Eventually the abuse of the population also declined, and the RPF could claim it had control of the region (Burnet, 2005). A critical and controversial step in suppressing the insurgency in the northwest was Kagame's choice of suspected *genocidaire* Rucagu to be Mayor of the town of Ruhengeri (at the center of the insurgency). It was a shrewd political move, as Rucagu was very active in promoting reconciliation in the region (Kinzer, 2008).

#### The "New Rwanda" (2000-present)

It had been clear for some time that although Hutu were ostensibly sharing power in Rwanda, it was actually Tutsi leaders of the RPF in control, and specifically Paul Kagame (as Vice President and Defense Minister) in control behind President Bizimungu. Some sources (e.g., Kinzer, 2007) say Bizimungu resigned, while others say he was forced out.<sup>79</sup> Kagame took over as interim president in March 2000, then was elected by a national election on August 25, 2003 by a landslide victory, 95.5% (Gready, 2010).<sup>80</sup> A presidential term in Rwanda lasts for seven years, after which a second term can be served. Kagame won the presidency again in 2010 with 93% of the vote. Such huge margins are questionable, however, because the RPF has effectively eliminated all opposition. Elections in 2003 and 2010 were accompanied by disappearances, assassinations and the closure of opposition parties (Gready, 2010; Straus & Waldorf, 2011). Just like 2003, in the run up to the elections of 2010, all major parties opposed to Kagame were either shut down, their leaders jailed on charges of genocide denial (e.g.,

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<sup>78</sup> However, Rwanda's intentions vis a vis the immense mineral wealth of eastern Congo, have long been suspect. There are a number of later engagements of Rwanda in Zaire/DRC, and Rwanda's relations with Uganda soured considerably by 1999 (Marysse & Reyntjens, 2005), but they are beyond the scope of this work.

<sup>79</sup> Bizimungu went on to found an opposition movement named Party for Democratic Renewal, which used the Kinyarwanda word *ubuyanja* ("renewal"). The party was accused of being radically Hutu and was shut down by the government, at which point using the word *ubuyanja* became taboo (Burnet, 2005).

<sup>80</sup> For the sake of brevity, many other troublesome events during this period are left out of this discussion.

Victoire Ingabire), or their leaders were killed (e.g., Andre Rwisereka of the Green Party).<sup>81</sup>

As the RPF has become effectively the only party with any power in Rwanda, it has become increasingly difficult for supporters to deny that it is an autocratic regime. In fact, the signs have been clear for quite some time, but the international community has been so enamored with Rwanda's vigorous return from a genocide the West could have stopped that it has not held the RPF or Kagame accountable (Pottier, 2002; 2005; Reyntjens, 2005; Straus & Waldorf, 2011; Burnet, 2005; 2008). In the run up to the elections in 2010, various international funders expressed increasing alarm at violence that at the very least was state-tolerated, if not state-sponsored. Some donors have withdrawn their support, while others continue to press the government to liberalize. That Rwanda may be repeating its history is a cause of great concern to many Rwanda specialists (Prunier, 2009; a number of authors in Reyntjens, 2005; Reyntjens, 2009; Kinzer, 2011; Sebarenzi, 2010; many authors in Straus & Waldorf, 2011; UNHCR, 2010; and quite a few more). For example, Reyntjens, writing in 2005, remarks on the "striking continuity from the pre-genocide to the post-genocide regime in Rwanda," a statement that has only been confirmed by more recent events:

Indeed the manner in which power is exercised by the RPF echoes that of the days of single-party rule in several respects. A small inner circle of RPF leaders takes the important decisions, while the cabinet is left with the daily routine of managing the state apparatus. Under both Habyarimana and Kagame, a clientelist network referred to as the *akazu* accumulates wealth and privileges. Both have manipulated ethnicity, the former by scapegoating and eventually exterminating the Tutsi, the latter by discriminating against the Hutu under the guise of ethnic amnesia. Both have used large-scale violence to eliminate their opponents, and they have done so in total impunity... While under the former regime, attacks, murders, and massacres of civilians during the early 1990s were never judicially investigated, let alone prosecuted, so the current regime permits RPA soldiers and powerful civilians who have ordered or committed assassinations and massacres to go unpunished.... Continuity is visible not just in the exercise of power, but also in the nature of the state... [after the genocide] the regime was able in a short time to establish total control over state and society. This control was seen in the maintenance of an efficient army, able to operate inside and far beyond the national borders; the establishment of "re-education," "solidarity" and "regroupment" camps; the

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<sup>81</sup> See International Institute for Justice and Development for a report on the 2010 Presidential elections in Rwanda, at: <http://www.ijjd.org/index.php/news/entry/rwanda-presidential-election-2010-rwandas-new-political-victims/>. Retrieved on April 15, 2011.

villagization policy; tense relations filled with distrust with the UN and NGOs; and the establishment of an important intelligence capacity...operating inside the country [and abroad]. (2005, p. 38-39)

Reyntjens (2005, p. 40) goes on to warn that the international community is engaged in “wishful thinking” in regards to the RPF. Giving the RPF a “genocide credit” has contributed to a situation that may be irreversible and catastrophic. The wishful thinking arises from Rwanda’s otherwise stellar and inspiring performance for a country coming out of such horrific circumstances. To be fair, there are many reasons to be enthralled with Rwanda’s progress, and in fact this study does consider socioeconomic empowerment to be a very important component of reconciliation (discussed at length in Chapter Three). The RPF-led government has gained well-deserved recognition for its economic progress, governmental discipline and foresight, and its orientation to development goals, women’s empowerment, environmental protections and so on. Rwanda has become a favorite of American corporations that are thrilled by its responsible approach to development and investment (see Gunther’s [2007] article, *Why CEOs Love Rwanda*). Kinzer (2008) provides a thorough summary of the more impressive aspects of the current government in Rwanda and its leader, Kagame.<sup>82</sup>

An intensive analysis of the RPF-led government’s approach to governance is beyond the scope of this study. However, what is important to this study is the way that the RPF-led government approaches reconciliation as a form of national unity to the detriment of lived experiences of violence in the region (Burnet, 2005). To some extent, such an approach is defensible because of the demands of reconstruction of a nation. However, in reconstructing the nation, the RPF is attempting to produce new Rwandan subjectivities through disinformation about Rwanda’s history and by assigning innocence and guilt to corporate categories of people. Importantly, the government of Rwanda only recognizes four categories of Rwandan: *rescapes* (Tutsi genocide survivors), *old caseload returnees* (Tutsi returned from exile), *new caseload returnees* (Hutu returned from refugee camps) and *genocidaires* (Hutu perpetrators of genocide).

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<sup>82</sup> However, Kinzer’s (2008) book did raise concerns about Kagame, and his (2011) piece is clearly more concerned.

By this category system, there are no innocent Hutu, and no guilty Tutsi.<sup>83</sup> As Pottier (2005, p. 210) observes, “anyone departing from this rigid typology, or offering a more nuanced reading of Rwanda’s post-genocide social fabric, risks being accused of denying that genocide occurred, even risks being called a *genocidaire*.” Vague laws on divisionism and genocide denial as enacted in 2003 (Sebarenzi, 2009; 2010; Hron, 2009) make any mention of ethnicity beyond these categories very risky.

The rigid typology with only guilty Hutu and innocent Tutsi serves at least one clear purpose. Because the RPF-led government only came into power through conquest (a fact often forgotten in the entire world’s recovery from the Rwandan genocide), it continually needs to legitimize its power. It accomplishes that by scripting itself as national savior, the international community as the guilty bystanders, and the Hutu as perpetrators (Burnet, 2005). The means by which the RPF enforces the guilt of the Hutu perpetrators are multiple. First, the *gacaca* is the localized tribunal process to try *genocidaires* throughout communities in Rwanda. Research on the *gacaca* is extensive, much of it critical and some of it complimentary, but it will not be summarized here (see Sebarenzi, 2010 for a thorough analysis of *gacaca*). Although it could potentially try Tutsi atrocities as well, it does not, the RPF’s argument generally being that genocide is not equivalent to some incidents of “personal excess” (Burnet, 2005).

Another strategy the government uses to establish Hutu guilt is to downplay moral acts by Hutu during the genocide. Through this study’s interviews of personnel at the government-sponsored survivors’ agency IBUKA, it was learned that persons identified as “rescuers” are certified as rescuers through an investigation into their actions during the genocide. Some claims are found to be false and others are eliminated by less courageous actions (e.g., a Hutu hiding one Tutsi, but revealing the location of another). Hutu intervening to save Tutsi are “very few,” according to IBUKA, which stood in stark contrast to all the mentions of Hutu assistance heard

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<sup>83</sup> Hutu who fled into Zaire are guilty by association (Umutesi, 2000; Pottier, 2005; Prunier, 2009) and are always subject to potential accusation as a *genocidaire*.

in interviews with survivors.<sup>84</sup> As Pottier (2005, p. 197) also argues, “heroic cross-ethnic solidarity in the face of death, it would later be revealed, had not been uncommon.” African Rights (1994; 2002) and Jefremovas (1995b) have also documented cases of Hutu courage.

Tutsi innocence, on the other hand, requires the rewriting of history, which RPF has been very effective at doing (Jefremovas, 1997; Pottier, 2005). Burnet (2005) analyses how the RPF created an entirely different narrative around the Kibeho massacre (despite the Australian peacekeepers on the scene), as does Pottier (2002, p. 53) in his consideration of “the gap between dominant narratives [espoused by the RPF] and established academic perspectives.” Pottier also focuses on the Kibeho massacre as an excellent example of the RPF’s rescripting of Rwandan events. There are many witnesses to RPF massacres, of course, so many witnesses have been killed or imprisoned (Burnet, 2005; African Rights, 1996); and mention of such massacres has been “completely silenced in the public sphere” (African Rights, 1996; Burnet, 2005, p. 156).

Pottier’s earlier work (2002) also describes the government’s reinvention of national identity in Rwanda, and in particular the revival of Macquet’s (1961) flawed thesis on *The Premise of Inequality*, despite an abundance of great research that had thoroughly debunked it. Divisions between Hutu and Tutsi were the creation of the colonial powers, so the argument goes, thus “draw[ing a straight line between the arrival of colonialism in Rwanda and the 1994 genocide” (Burnet, 2005). In regards to the events of 1959, the RPF attempts to portray that period as distinctively anti-Tutsi, although the evidence indicates the conflict was more about the control of land by new elites (Pottier, 2002). Finally, in terms of establishing Tutsi innocence, there is very little history curriculum in Rwandan schools (ICTJ, 2007), but the *ingando* solidarity camps provide the RPF’s version of Rwandan history (Burnet, 2005; Sebarenzi, 2010). That version of history portrays a peaceful pre-colonial era which was only marred by the arrival

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<sup>84</sup> Data from interviews with IBUKA personnel in January of 2009, in Kigali, Rwanda. I did not visit IBUKA planning to unpack its claims about “rescuers,” I had simply been referred to IBUKA by an associate who knew I wanted to do life histories with Hutu rescuers. As I had already nearly completed my fieldwork, it struck me that IBUKA personnel claimed the stories of rescue were “very few” when nearly every study participant had mentioned one or more Hutu acts of assistance during the genocide (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

of the colonial powers. All new caseload returnees to Rwanda had to go through the *ingando* before they could be employed in post-genocide Rwanda (Burnet, 2005), and now many populations go to the *ingando*, including teachers, ministry workers, and students going to University.<sup>85</sup>

Some of the government's methods serve the ends of both Tutsi innocence and Hutu guilt. The best known among these is the month of mourning every April, which is concentrated around a week of mourning (April 7-14) called *icyumweru icyunamo* in *Kinyarwanda*. Again, Burnet (2005) does a good job of conveying the importance of this time for promoting the RPF's production of subjectivities. Radio and television are full of survivors' testimonies, video footage of the genocide, and speeches by public officials (sometimes reminding Rwandans of how the West let the genocide happen).<sup>86</sup> All of Rwanda is in a somber mood during this period. Tutsi survivors in this study sometimes reported the month of mourning "retraumatized" them, while Hutu reported feeling like "everything is genocide, genocide, genocide."<sup>87</sup> This is also a time of burying bodies that have been disinterred from information obtained through the *gacaca*. That some Rwandans feel not all those bodies are Tutsi bodies has been reported by Burnet (2005), and Ranck (1998). This study also heard accounts of bodies being buried in genocide memorials that the observers believed had died well after the genocide. Whether or not this is true, the belief that it is so is very distressing to both Hutu and Tutsi: the Hutu for the erasure of RPF atrocities against them, and the Tutsi because they don't want killers buried alongside their loved ones (Burnet, 2005). Lastly, even among Tutsi survivors the month of mourning is sometimes seen as a way of manipulating their suffering. Respondents in Burnet's (2005) study and in this study stated that they felt that "those from outside the country," i.e., the RPF, couldn't understand their suffering, but that it was gaining political power from it. Some also felt the RPF was wrong in making all Hutu out to be *genocidaires*. One woman in this study reported feeling

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<sup>85</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009).

<sup>86</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009).

<sup>87</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2006-2009).

“closer to the Hutu who were here and killing during the genocide” than to the Tutsi returnees from Uganda.<sup>88</sup>

There are real dangers in thwarting, manipulating, and enforcing the memories of the Rwandan population (Lemarchand, 2010), when even the elite are forced to remember events in certain ways. As Burnet (2005, p. 261) argues, whatever the RPF may hope to be accomplishing, there are great differences in how Rwandans view their history, and there is “evidence of diametrically opposed worldviews generated by very different lived social realities and subjectivities.” These different social realities will not simply go away because of government claims to unity. Instead, the resentment of Hutu grows, and they are the great majority of the Rwandan population. As Reyntjens (2005, p. 40) warns, “most Rwandans, who are excluded and know full well that they have been robbed of their civil and political rights, are frustrated, angry and even desperate. Such conditions constitute a fertile breeding ground for more structural violence...and may well eventually again lead to acute violence.”

### Religion in Post-genocide Rwanda

The genocide in Rwanda created a great deal of “spiritual confusion” and chaos.<sup>89</sup> Implicated in genocide and decimated by the killing, the churches were even more fractured after the genocide (Janzen & Janzen, 2000) than they had been before (Gatwa, 2005; Longman, 2010). As Sommers (1996) saw in the refugee camps of Zaire, Hutu refugees commonly attended multiple types of Christian services looking for comfort and psychological support. A significant number of Rwandans converted to Islam in the camps or later (Sommers, 1996; Wax, 2002; Walker, 2007), and others have simply left religion altogether.<sup>90</sup> As the Catholic Church was

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<sup>88</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2006-2009).

<sup>89</sup> The phrase “spiritual confusion” was used multiple times by study participants to refer to the disruption in spiritual and religious certitude for many Rwandans after the genocide.

<sup>90</sup> For more on the rise of Islam, see (Wax, 2002; Walker, 2007; and Kubai, 2007) and the recently released (2011) film entitled *Kinyarwanda*. The film provides an enactment of Tutsi and Hutu seeking refuge in the Grand Mosque of Kigali and the madrassa of Nyanza after a fatwa against the killing of Tutsi was issued by the mufti of Rwanda. See: <http://www.kinyarwandamovie.com/>, last accessed on April 15, 2011. Although some accounts say muslims did not participate in the genocide, Des Forges (1999) shows there was some minimal participation.

particularly associated with the genocide, many Rwandans have left the Catholic Church and joined Protestant sects.<sup>91</sup> The Catholic Church has not been highly active in the realm of reconciliation work, but the Protestant churches, especially evangelical or “free” schismatic churches, have been very involved in Rwandan reconciliation efforts (Van ‘t Spijker, 1999; Cantrell, 2007; 2009).<sup>92</sup> This section describes post-genocide transformations in Rwandan religious life of most salience to this study, including: the emergence of “free” churches; the re-emergence of the Anglican Church; and traditional religion in the post-genocide era.

### *Emergence of “Free” Churches*

“Free” churches, i.e., Christian churches that are not linked to the government or to international church bodies, “mushroomed” after the genocide (Van ‘t Spijker, 1999, p. 164). While the established churches have wrestled with internal and external divisions and friction with the state, spontaneous Christian groups (many of them started with small prayer groups) grew from a number of about 150 in 1997, to over 300 in just one year’s time (Van ‘t Spijker, 1999). Van ‘t Spijker noted that this growth was all the more surprising Rwanda has not been a country with an active independent church movement.<sup>93</sup> Writing in 1999, he observed that many of the new “free” churches were established by English speaking returnees who were dissatisfied with the established churches for their role in the genocide. He argued that the result was that some churches were “organized along ethnic lines” for “the first time in the history of the church in Rwanda” (1999, p. 165). Among the free churches and the established churches, Van ‘t

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<sup>91</sup> The Catholic Church still wields a lot of power in Rwanda, but has been discredited because of its refusal to speak out against the rise of genocide ideology and the participation of many clergy members in the genocide. As Cantrell (2007) notes, the genocide took about half of the Catholic Church’s priests (despite Hutu at the highest ranks, many priests were Tutsi). Hoyweghen (1996, p. 395, cited in Cantrell) described the Catholic Church in 1995 as “de facto beheaded,” and “in a state of shock.”

<sup>92</sup> Janzen & Janzen (2000) and Van ‘t Spijker (1999) recognize some Catholic efforts in the area of reconciliation, but the overall effort appears to be modest. This study heard from a number of religious leaders who acknowledged some Catholic activity, but suggested it was quite a bit less than Protestant churches. One organization studied at length in this project was in fact a Catholic reconciliation program with a charismatic flavor.

<sup>93</sup> Van ‘t Spijker (1999) cites Barnett’s (1968) outdated research, which identifies only nine African states that did not have independent churches in 1967. Six of the nine were predominantly Islamic, and Rwanda was among the other three that only had churches that had been established by missionaries. Clarifying whether or not Rwanda developed more independent churches after 1967 is beyond the scope of this study.



Spijker (1999) acknowledged a number of programs that were “healing communities... dispensers of consolation where there is grief, creators of community where there is distrust, givers of aid to the poor, and providing care and guidance to widows and orphans” (p. 164). He adds, some churches intentionally bring together “different interest groups and ethnic groups,” while others do not.<sup>94</sup> Although Van ‘t Spijker’s observations are now more than a decade old, this study found that they remain for the most part accurate. For example, Van ‘t Spikjer (1999) reflects:

It is surprising to see that in these new Christian communities there is no stress on indigenous expressions of culture, as has been typical for many other independent churches in Africa. The appearance of churches instituted by Africans has often been explained by the failure of Western missionaries to relate the Christian message to the African Culture. [Noting two exceptions], all the other churches which were studied show merely the need to be independent from mission related-churches, which may correlate with the emphasis on the end of colonialism stressed by the present government. This may be an indication that the appearance of the new Christian communities rather expressed the need for political liberation than for a cultural liberation.” (p. 166-167).

Indeed, this study also found that many church leaders and church goers state the importance of being free of church hierarchy as primary in their motivations for attending free churches. On a number of occasions, Christians in Rwanda referred to North American or European churches as “like museums.” Africa, one suggested, would be showing Christians worldwide the “way back to the Father.” These expressions seem to indicate an anti-institutional bent that will be taken up again in Chapter Seven.

Van ‘t Spijker (1999) also describes the prevalence of “the spirit of Pentecostalism” in Rwanda, especially in the free churches:

Many of these new denominations display rather ecstatic expressions in worship services that go on for hours with strong participation by the Christians present... Some communities have sessions of healing through prayer and many emphasize the literal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. There is the conscience to life in an apocalyptic time and the expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Many groups include in their

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<sup>94</sup> For future reference in this study African Evangelicalistic Enterprise (AEE) is one of the programs named by Van ‘t Spijker (1999) and *Eglise Vivante de Jesus-Christo* is another. The latter is association with Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR). AEE and PCR are two of the cases presented in this study.

services moments of individual loud prayer by all participants at the same time. (p. 167-168)

Van 't Spijker (1999) draws on Hackett's (1990) research to argue that this new "revivalist movement" in Rwanda is to be distinguished from the East African Revival which was started in Rwanda in the late 1930s. For example, he describes the newer movement as "much more characterized by language, doctrine, the preaching style, and the use of electronic equipment" rather than emphasizing indigenous roots. Indeed, Van 't Spijker's description of the free churches of Rwanda bears a striking resemblance to the services viewed in multiple locations in Kigali during this study. However, the East African Revival was invoked on multiple occasions during this study to contextualize what was apparent in the free churches, and in fact this study goes on to argue that certain indigenous practices are present in some form.

The RPF-led government appears to be receptive to the new churches of Rwanda. Van 't Spijker (1999) suggests it is because the government is quite happy to see more people leave the Catholic Church, as well as to see pastors of the new churches (usually but not always male) find jobs. More recent sources observe that there are "numerous associations and interfaith groups... that are contribut[ing] to understanding and tolerance among various religious groups" in Rwanda today. Many of these groups are run by "foreign missionaries and church linked NGOs of various religious groups." They "openly promote their religious beliefs and the government welcome[s] their development assistance."<sup>95</sup> The government welcome is particularly so for groups associated with the Anglican Church of Rwanda (Cantrell, 2007; 2009).

### *The Re-emergence of the Anglican Church in Rwanda*

Although criticism of the churches' role in the genocide has focused largely on the Catholic Church, in fact most of the more centralized churches, including the Anglican Church,

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<sup>95</sup> United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (September 14, 2007). *International Religious Freedom Report – Rwanda*. Accessed on January 11, 2011 at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90115.htm>. Also from this source: "There has been a proliferation of small, usually Christian-linked schismatic religious groups since the 1994 genocide."

played some role in the genocide (Rittner et al, 2004; Longman, 2010). For example, the Anglican bishops of Kigali and Shyira dioceses had both been strong supporters of Habyarimana's regime (Cantrell, 2007). After the genocide, the posts of such genocide-complicit leaders in the Anglican Church were readily filled by the Anglican Consultative Council with Anglican clergy returning from exile in Uganda (Cantrell, 2007), most notably Archbishop Kolini and Bishop Rucyahana, both important figures in Rwanda politics (described below). In Cantrell's (2007; 2009) research, "virtually all of the Anglican pastors...were raised in Uganda and returned in the wake of the genocide. Educated in Uganda, they speak English as a primary language, and *Kinyarwanda* as a second language, if at all." Indeed this study also found remarkably disproportionate Ugandan Tutsi leadership in both free and established churches in Rwanda, although none that did not speak *Kinyarwanda*.

To its credit, the Anglican Church's rhetoric is strongly in favor of unity and reconciliation. Cantrell (2007) describes:

The church has tried to recall the spirit and practices of the charismatic East African Revival Movement of the 1930s. Central to this is the [b]iblical, and widespread African, belief in Prophecy. The church claims that a divinely inspired prophecy has been issued for Rwanda, asserting that the country will be "a model of reconciliation and recovery and that the wider world will look in awe upon the ability of Rwandans to heal from the genocide." The prophecy, printed in the programme guide for the Ruhengeri crusade (PEER 2002), further claims that 'Rwanda will become the source of a "Spiritual Renaissance" for the world' (p. 341).

Although Anglicans in Rwanda are not Pentecostals, they do "accept charismatic practices, including prophecy, healing and speaking in tongues, all under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (Cantrell, 2007, p. 345). Recalling that the East African Revival originated in northwest Rwanda through Ugandan outreach, Cantrell (2007) notes the "deep cultural roots" of the prophecy just stated, meaning the present Anglican Church is "a Ugandan product for a second time" (p. 341, also footnoted material).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Going one layer deeper, Cantrell (2007, p. 352) notes that the "Anglicans of Ruhengeri [in northwestern Rwanda] are the spiritual heirs of the *nyabingi*, a cult of female prophetesses whose conversion to Christianity helped legitimize the Church in northwest Rwanda (Bauer, 1977)."

What is most problematic for Rwandans, Hutu and Tutsi alike, is the effect of Ugandan Tutsi church leadership on the Anglican Church's relationship with the RPF-dominated government. The Anglican Church hierarchy is "thoroughly Tutsi and Anglophone, if not Ugandan" (Cantrell, 2009), a fact confirmed (though not intentionally) by the interviews in this study. As Cantrell (2009) observes, many clergy use English in church functions, only serving to remind Rwandans of the origins of the leadership.<sup>97</sup> Although in its goals, the Anglican Church seeks to promote reconciliation and a "national identity rooted in Christianity" (Cantrell, 2007), in reality it is often seen as a "mouthpiece of the [RPF] regime," as for example with its unwillingness to object to RPF atrocities (Cantrell, 2007, p. 342). As Prunier (1997) and others (Zorbas, 2004) have noted, political power is in the hands of Ugandan Tutsi occupying key posts in every sector of Rwandan society, and that includes the churches. In fact, Cantrell (2009) provides some evidence that Kagame's government has some influence in the appointment and promotion of Anglican Church leaders.

Perhaps even more problematic, given the Anglican Church's strong ties to the RPF, is the rising importance of cross-Atlantic evangelism, in which the Anglican leaders of Rwanda play a part. In response to the North American Episcopalian church's division over the issues of homosexuality and same-sex marriage, Rwanda's Anglican Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini ordained two American archbishops in 2000 and two more in 2001 to lead the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA), thus bringing more than 20,000 American conservative Christians into a "virtual province" of the Anglican Church of Rwanda (Cantrell, 2007; 2009).<sup>98</sup> "Kolini and his bishops have often declared that what is happening in the American church [liberalism towards homosexuality] is tantamount to a 'spiritual genocide of the truth.'" Likening this spiritual genocide to the Rwandan genocide, "the Anglicans in Rwanda have cast their mission as one of rescue" (Cantrell, 2007, p. 346). Their influence among American Christians is a surprising

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<sup>97</sup> Such services are often attended by Anglophone expatriates in Rwanda, because they are conducted in English and are generally "only an hour and a half long" (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>98</sup> As of early 2009, Kolini headed an American jurisdiction of 144 congregations, and had 45 new "works in progress" (Cantrell, 2009).

reversal of the typical direction of evangelistic mission.<sup>99</sup>

In that mission of rescue, the Anglican Church has been joined by a growing number of evangelicals from the United States in particular. In addition to the AMiA and its congregations, which support many projects in Rwanda, there are American evangelicals of mega-churches who have taken a great interest in Rwandan revival. The most well-known among them is Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church, who has decided Rwanda will be his first “purpose driven nation” in keeping with his *Purpose Driven Life* book (Kinzer, 2008; Cantrell, 2009).<sup>100</sup> Rick Warren, interestingly enough, is on Kagame’s Presidential Advisory Council. There are a growing number of books that are “part and parcel of a literary culture that has helped make Rwanda the scene of considerable focus and missionary endeavors by the North American Christian community, and by the AMiA specifically” (Cantrell, 2009, p. 326). These include: Kolini (2008), Rucyahana (2007) and Ilibagiza (2007), to which should be added Larson (2009) and Rouner (2002).<sup>101</sup>

That Christians from the United States would support many worthy projects and the laudable aim of reconciliation in Rwanda is not at issue, but what is of concern is the fact that most American evangelicals are very ignorant of key problems in Rwandan history and ethnicity, and therefore unknowingly support an autocratic regime with a very problematic human rights record. Cantrell (2007, p. 337-338) argues:

The narrative that generally persists in AMiA and the wider American evangelical community, a narrative neither refuted nor challenged by PEER [the Anglican Church] is that Kagame and the RPF invaded Rwanda only to stop the genocide and rebuild the country. Such ignorance allows many of Rwanda’s supporters to picture themselves as

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<sup>99</sup> As a specific example of the linkage between church leadership, the political leadership in Rwanda, and churches in the US, consider the case of All Souls Anglican Church in Chicago. All Souls is one of Kolini’s churches in the US, which had invited Paul Rusesabagina (of *Hotel Rwanda* fame) to speak to their congregation. Rusesabagina has run afoul of the Rwandan government for his criticism of Kagame’s regime. When Kagame heard of the event, he contacted Kolini, who contacted the church to cancel it (Pulliam, 2007), which it did.

<sup>100</sup> *Purpose Driven Life* (2004) is very popular in Rwanda (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>101</sup> Kinzer also writes about American evangelical support of Rwandan Anglicans, and Rwanda as the model or “global lab for the new Christian Century” (p. 303-307).

coming along behind a benevolent RPF to rescue the country from its underdevelopment and help in its recovery, without having to face the RPF's history or the larger political issues at stake for Rwanda and the region. (Cantrell, 2007, p. 337)

Although this study did not set out to examine how knowledgeable American evangelicals were about the human rights record of the RPF or its attempts to rescript Rwandan history in its favor, it was hard to ignore the evidence supporting Cantrell's chief claim. In written and verbal form, a number of evangelicals contacted through this study reproduced outright false or simplified versions of Rwandan history that not only reproduced the "party line" of the RPF, but which flew in the face of all the excellent research in the region conducted well before the genocide. Pottier (2002; 2005) provides perhaps the most comprehensive analyses of how the RPF has rewritten history with the unwitting compliance of Western academics, journalists and development specialists who dare not to question the RPF because of the West's inaction during the genocide. At least some members of the evangelical community can be viewed in the same manner.

#### *Traditional Religion in the Post-genocide Era*

A number of authors have commented on the surprising absence of traditional religious practices in the post genocide era. For example, as quoted previously, Van 't Spijker (1999, p. 166), expressed surprise that there was "no stress on indigenous expressions of culture" in the independent churches that emerged after the genocide. Writing only a year later, Janzen and Janzen (2000) observed that "divination was nowhere to be seen" in the years after the genocide. Commenting on Taylor's (1992) logic of "blockage and flow" in Rwandan culture, Janzen and Janzen remarked that they heard nothing of that nature, and formed the impression that "all such rubrics had been shattered" by the genocide. What stories they heard of forgiveness were attributed to religious faith (2000, p. 202). Yet, a small number of authors mention traditional practices in the midst of larger works. For example, Ranck (1998; 2000) critiques Western paradigms of trauma and healing (specifically PTSD), and notes that although many Rwandans deny traditional practices, in fact some Rwandans admit to using them. Even Rwandans of very

Christian faith do at times use traditional practices, as reflected in Janzen and Janzen's (2000) account of a church leader's staunchly Catholic mother who went to a diviner.

This researcher had some curiosity about traditional practices in Rwanda, especially in light of all the bodies tortured in brutal ways, and thrown into mass graves without proper burials. As Ranck (2000, p. 201) writes, "The absence of bodies emerges as a presence and continual source of suffering, but as well presents very specific problems in regard to what mourning can mean and how it might take place." Janzen and Janzen (2000) also speak to the importance of recovering the dead bodies for proper burials (an ongoing process in Rwanda, even today) in order to build memories of the dead and reestablish bonds with them. Janzen and Janzen (2000) suggest that Rwandans might benefit from reviving some of their traditional religious healing methods, which are not actually at odds with modern medicine. In particular, the healing rituals of *ngoma* might be mobilized for Rwandans to transform "chronic and crisis pain into sources of healing and strength" (2000, p. 212). The salience of traditional healing rituals is discussed in more depth in Chapter Seven.

#### Women's organizations

To contextualize any discussion about the role of women's organizations in Rwanda today, it is first necessary to recall the extremely difficult experiences many Rwandan women have been through. Then, the proliferation of women's groups is described. Last, the role of women in reconciliation efforts in Rwanda is discussed.

#### *Violence against Women*

Women, especially Tutsi women, bore the brunt of much of the violence in the genocide. The destabilizing effects of Tutsi women's sexuality have often been treated as threats to the body politic, from the pre-colonial days where they were accused of blocking flow (Taylor, C., 1992), to the post-colonial days when the Tutsi women viewed as seductresses of Hutu men for the interests of the RPF (Ranck, 1998; Taylor, C., 1992; Chretien, 1995). In fact, many of the

most hateful messages of the RTLM and the journal *Kangura* showed very graphic images of Tutsi women in sexual contact with UN soldiers, weak Hutu leaders, and other parties seen to serve the interests of the RPF.

Therefore it is not surprising that many Tutsi women who survived the genocide were the victims of sexual violence, as Rwandan identities have shifted and their bodies have been the sites of political discourse (Das, 1996 as cited in Ranck, 1998). Women everywhere are “mapped onto” social construction of the nation, and rape is in a very real sense a “memory practice projected into the future” (Ranck, 1998, p. 6). Beyond rape and sexual slavery, sexual mutilations included cutting off breasts; puncturing of the vagina with spears, arrows, sticks, knives; pouring of battery acid into the vagina; dismemberment of body parts that “looked” Tutsi (like noses); forced incest with their children; and many more horrific forms of torture. Many Tutsi women survived the genocide only to be impregnated and infected with AIDS by one of their many violators (HRW, 1996; Taylor, C., 1999). These violations entailed extreme humiliation and degradation of the woman’s role as mother, wife, and human being.

Worse, some women were sexually violated by both sides of the conflict, as with Tutsi victims of rape during the genocide who were viewed as *ibiyitso* (traitors) by incoming RPF soldiers and raped again (Twagiramariya & Turshen, 1998).<sup>102</sup> Rape survivors have also faced various post-genocide challenges. Many have borne children and/or contracted AIDS from the rapists, posing socio-psychological as well as physical challenges. Social stigmas attached to being rape victims, to having children of rape, and to being left without the potential for marriage are very sharp. Even those who were not raped have faced extreme difficulties as widows, and this includes many Hutu women. Many have lost their husbands to violence or to prison, yet they serve as heads of households to dozens of orphans. And for the Hutu, they face accusations and suspicion for being *genocidaires* even if they are not (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b).

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<sup>102</sup> This study included an interview with one Tutsi survivor who was safely hidden and fed during the genocide. She told of emerging at the arrival of the RPF which she described as “the most traumatic time” of the genocide, because she was labeled as *ibiyitso* and, she said indirectly, raped.



Furthermore, because of both traditional and legal inheritance laws, women had no rights to the land of their dead husbands and families, or even to their own children. The land inheritance issue was recognized soon after the genocide, but was not addressed until a national seminar in 1998, which resulted in revisions to the legal code in 1999 (Pottier, 2002).

### *Proliferation of Women's Groups in Post-genocide Rwanda*

Given the enormous challenges many Rwandan women face, the proliferation of women's groups in post-genocide Rwanda has been "nothing short of remarkable" (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b, p. 97). Newbury and Baldwin (2001b) have identified four key factors in their proliferation:

1. The severity of the crisis created by the genocide and the government's lack of means to meet the critical needs of the population.
2. Rwanda's long tradition of vibrant organizational activity, *foyaux sociaux*.
3. Massive support from the international community, much of which was targeted to the needs of women.
4. Favorable policies of the government, including the establishment of the Ministry of Gender, the promotion of local women's councils, and so on.

The severity of the crisis created by the genocide has been discussed previously. What is lesser known is Rwandan women's long associational history. Beginning with the First Republic, Kayibanda's government promoted *foyers sociaux* throughout the country to enable women to organize around various needs. Though they mostly promoted to socialize women into their gender roles (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b), the *foyers* nevertheless served to develop leadership and associational experience for their participants (Umutesi, 2000). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, women's groups were increasingly active on regional and national levels, due to a decline in state services, political liberalization, and external support for women's organizations (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b). Women's associations had even come together to organize street demonstrations about educational access and women's rights not long before the genocide (Des Forges, 1999). Women's associational activity was also evident in the refugee

camps of Zaire, where almost as soon as women landed in a new location, they were already organizing to meet the needs of refugees.<sup>103</sup>

However, the genocide and exodus to Zaire was devastating to Rwandan women's associations. Many leaders were killed, as well-educated women of any ethnicity were targets (Des Forges, 1999; Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b; Burnet, 2005). Nevertheless, women's organizations new and old took leading roles in efforts to meet the crisis of post-genocide Rwanda (Kumar, 2001), as a number of donors supported the regrowth of women's organizations offering a wide variety of services (e.g., material assistance, psychosocial counseling, microcredit, medical assistance, skills training). In fact, there are many more women's organizations in Rwanda today than there were before the genocide, and they serve a wider variety of functions. This abundance is seen by some observers as a problem, as their services are at times redundant (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b), thus wasting resources. Some of the redundancy has been due to the fact that most groups were ethnically homogeneous after the genocide, though they have become more heterogeneous over time (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b; Burnet, 2005).<sup>104</sup> The Hutu population is underserved by women's organizations in Rwanda, as there is a one-sided focus on genocide widows by both national and international supporters (Stensrud & Husby, 2005). Much international funding has gone to government programs for survivors, such as AVEGA and IBUKA (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b), which by the definition of "survivor" alienate Hutu women, and at times even Tutsi women, who feel that their suffering is being manipulated for political gain or who feel that they are assumed to be passive victims with no agency (Ranck, 1998; 2000).

The fourth critical factor in the proliferation of women's organizations in post-genocide

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<sup>103</sup> For a riveting personal account of the refugee camps, and the constantly adapting organizational activity of women's groups in the camps, see Umutesi (2000).

<sup>104</sup> Women's organizations in Rwanda tend to mirror such organizations throughout Africa, in that they serve to reproduce social cleavages, doing more to promote the social status of the elite than to address the concerns of the majority (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000; 2001). In Rwanda the leaders of many women's organizations have connections to politically prominent people in government (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b). In reality, this generally means *men* in government, as women's access is still determined to a large extent in Rwanda by the men with whom they are associated (Burnet, 2008).

Rwanda has been the progressive policies of the RPF-led government. The Rwandan government has created a Ministry of Gender, has organized women's councils all the way down to the local "cell" level and instituted an electoral system with gender quotas for the national parliament (Burnet, 2008). Although the quota was set at only 30%, by the 2003 parliamentary elections, women had the majority of the seats (Powley, 2004), and in the elections of 2008, they gained 56%.<sup>105</sup> However, as Burnet (2008) cautions, the increasing authoritarianism of the Rwandan government has diminished women's influence in making policy at the same time as their participation has increased.<sup>106</sup> Although some women's groups benefit from national women's initiatives (e.g., the umbrella organization, *Twese Hamwe/Profemmes*), national groups often represent the interests of urban elite women and are out of touch with needs at the grassroots. Additionally, as they are linked to the government (financially and politically), they do not provide good forums to advocate for issues of sensitivity with the Rwandan government (Stensrud & Husby, 2005).

#### *Women and Reconciliation*

Both within and outside of government supported programming, women's organizations have been playing a major role in Rwandan reconciliation (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000; 2001a; 2001b; Stensrud & Husby, 2005; Ranck, 1998; 2000; Boyd, 2001; Mutamba & Izabiliza, 2005). Within recognized groups, they have provided spaces for women to "reestablish social ties, seek solace, find support," and even make progress towards reconciliation (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b; Burnet, 2005). In addition to organizations recognized by the government (which number "too many to count"),<sup>107</sup> a few Rwanda scholars have noted the emergence of very small informal women's groups (Ranck, 1998; Burnet, 2005). Some groups of Tutsi women that have not joined the survivors' organizations have instead reached out to help Hutu women support

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<sup>105</sup> Data from fieldnotes, 2008.

<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, while women's power at the national level appears to be changing, the government has not addressed cultural stigmas attached to rape or widowhood, and offers no protection from harassment at the local level.

<sup>107</sup> Data from interviews with National Unity and Reconciliation Commission Personnel in January, 2009.

their families and feed their husbands in prison (Burnet, 2005). An example of such a group is *Mbwira Ndumva* (“speak, I am listening”), based in Kigali. This organization provides skills training, micro-credit, trauma counseling, and a variety of services for orphans. What makes it unique is that all women are welcomed regardless of ethnicity, and Hutu women returning from exile are intentionally welcomed to also share their suffering (Ranck, 2000).<sup>108</sup> As Ranck observes, this kind of association is rarely mentioned in the Rwanda literature, but is critical to societal transformation:

They constitute[s] powerful acts of remembrance and resistance to the violence that has caused their suffering. As these groups of individuals meet to tell their stories, to listen to the wounded words of their neighbors, these ‘wounded spaces’ become sites where the dominant narrative of Rwandan history can be disrupted and the collective traumas of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial violence can be transformed (p. 209).

Importantly, Rwandans express to many researchers the willingness to follow the women after the genocide, and indeed this study overwhelmingly supported that impression. In interviews with Fatuma Ndingiza (Executive Secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission), and John Mutamba (now Gender Responsive Program Coordinator at UNIFEM Rwanda), pragmatic and essentialist reasons for women’s leadership were mentioned. In the aftermath of the genocide, 70% of Rwanda’s population was female, while more than a million Rwandan men were either dead or in exile. It was plainly obvious to many Rwandans interviewed for this study that “the men created the genocide, now it is time for the women to heal the nation.”<sup>109</sup> In an interview with John Mutamba (a returnee from Uganda) he stated:

Women are more natural at reconciliation. Yes, this is in their heart but also in our history, women bridged families and clans, they did not have ethnic identities. Also, after the genocide they had to come together to survive, the burdens were so great. They had the loss of their families, their innocence, their role as the protectors of life. Some had even lost their womanhood....But women are always in the role of making peace, they are good at building bridges and humanizing even the prisoners without the government

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<sup>108</sup> Data confirmed in fieldnotes and interviews when I visited *Mbwira Ndumva* in 2008, having been referred to the organization by a former counselor for the ICTR.

<sup>109</sup> Data from interview in September, 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda, as confirmed in multiple conversations and interviews.

even telling them so. Look, the genocide was driven by the elites, and even though the elites are also now driving reconciliation, Rwandan men were demystified in our culture when they ran away like birds. The women protected the young, but the men flew away....but what I say is not so true of the elite women. For some of them, they lost their status, and some were party to the genocide scheme, whereas the poor women lost their entire families. Someone who has almost nothing left is so humbled, and forgiveness requires humility. That is the example of Jesus. Forgiveness goes with being disempowered. The more powerful people are, the less they forgive. Justice is what they want! And you won't even see these women in the associations, they say they don't need others.<sup>110</sup>

Mutamba is like many returnees from Rwanda (including Kagame) in that he is one of a generation of men raised in exile by his mother. Thus, whatever else might be said about Kagame's autocratic regime, both the data from this study and the body of literature about post-genocide Rwanda indicate a quite positive environment regarding gender in Rwanda.

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<sup>110</sup> Data from interview on October, 18, 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda.

## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of this study draws most heavily from the adult learning theory of transformational learning, as conceptualized by Jack Mezirow (1978a), and considerably revised and expanded upon by a variety of his colleagues and critics.<sup>1</sup> The first section of this chapter describes transformational learning theory in detail, including the early origins of the theory and critical developments of the theory that are most relevant to this study. The second section of this chapter briefly summarizes the literature on post-conflict reconciliation, and important distinctions from that literature. The chapter closes by suggesting the way in which the two theories might work together in developing a theory of *transformative reconciliation*.

### Transformational Learning Theory

Discussed in the first section of this chapter are the origins of transformational learning theory and the key theoretical constructs at the center of Mezirow's (1978a; 1990) theory as well as subsequent development of the theory. This discussion is followed by an exploration of the further development of transformational learning theory. Included in this exploration are five key areas that are of importance to this study: context and power; rational and other ways of knowing, culture, and spirituality; and transformative learning in personal or social crisis. The section concludes with an examination of transformative learning in peacebuilding contexts.

### *Origins of Theory*

Jack Mezirow's (1978a) theory of perspective transformation was influenced by Paulo Freire's (1970) literacy work in Brazil, as well as a variety of intellectual traditions including Dewey's pragmatism, Blumer and Mead's symbolic interactionism, Gould's psychoanalytic theory of adult development, and especially Habermas's critical social theory (Finger and Asun, 2001). Most authors, including Mezirow (1978a), credit the early origins of the theory to Freire,

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "transformative learning" and "transformational learning" are both used throughout this work, and are taken to mean essentially the same thing. "Perspective transformation" refers to one distinct part of transformational learning as a process, though is also synonymous with the first two terms in some usages.

whose contributions were first represented in his work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire's work radically altered adult literacy (and indeed educational) practices in both the developing and industrialized worlds through his elaboration of "conscientization" practices, which were aimed at helping peasants to read not only words but to "read the world." Through "conscientization," learners become aware of the oppressive forces in their lives, transforming themselves from objects to subjects acting upon and changing their social worlds, both collectively and individually (Freire, 1970). For Freire, the ultimate goal of education is liberation from the oppression which has been encoded into a people's "frame of reference[s]" about self and society through their roles and relationships, and especially through the "banking" concept of education. Freire strongly believed in both theory and "praxis," which is "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it."<sup>2</sup>

Mezirow also called heavily on Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action, which drew distinctions between instrumental and communicative domains of learning, each with "different purposes, logics of inquiry, criteria of rationality, and modes of validating beliefs" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8).<sup>3</sup> "Instrumental learning" dominates adult education practice, and is based on predictable and observable phenomena, consisting of principles and laws which allow us to learn how to manipulate and control our environment. "This involves feelings, intentions, values, moral issues," and so on (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). "Communicative learning" requires assess[ing] the meanings behind words, and becoming "critically reflective of the *assumptions* of the person communicating" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 9, emphasis in original). These assumptions include intent, conventional wisdom, and religious worldview; whether or not one says what is meant; the character and qualifications of the communicator; and the relevance,

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<sup>2</sup> "It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection." Found online at the Freire Institute: <http://www.freire.org/praxis-action-reflection/>

<sup>3</sup> Habermas's domains of learning also include *normative learning* (orienting to common values and expectation of certain behaviors reflecting those values) and *impressionistic learning* (learning to enhance one's impression on others) (Mezirow, 2000, p. 10)

timing and context of the communication (Mezirow, 2000, p. 9).

Habermas critiqued overdependence on instrumental learning (i.e., instrumental rationality) as a hegemonic ideology, and communicative learning as overly dependent on subjective understanding. In contrast, the domain of learning he called “emancipatory learning” serves to free us from constraints, distortions, and errors in our knowledge that are oppressive. (Cranton & Roy, 2003). Mezirow posits that transformational learning theory redefines Habermas’s “emancipatory learning” as “the *transformation process* that pertains in both instrumental and communicative learning domains” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 10, emphasis added). Mezirow also drew from Habermas’s theory the importance of reflection “as a form of self-formation that emancipates as it dissolves the constraining spell of unexamined beliefs,” as well as “the central role of discourse in validating beliefs,” each of which became “building blocks” for transformation theory (Mezirow, 2000, p. xiii). Reflection and discourse are discussed in more detail in the relevant sections below.

By extending Freire’s (1970) groundbreaking work on literacy and “conscientization,” and Habermas’ concept of “emancipatory learning” into a psychological model of adult development, Mezirow’s theory has spurred decades of research and debate into what has become the predominant theory of adult learning (Taylor, 2007). The seminal study from which the theory was formed was focused on women participating in higher education re-entry programs throughout the United States after long hiatuses away from school. Mezirow summarizes his findings from the study as follows:

The major theoretical finding of the study was the identification of perspective transformation as the central learning process occurring in the personal development of women participating in these college programs. By becoming critically aware of the context – biographical, historical, cultural – of their beliefs and feelings about themselves and their role in society, the women could effect a change in the way they had tacitly structured their assumptions and expectations. This change constituted a learned transformation; the process resulting from it was designated transformative learning (1978a, p. 7).

Mezirow provides an example of such a perspective transformation:



For example, a housewife goes to secretarial school in the evening and finds to her amazement that the other women do not have to rush home to cook dinner for their husbands as she does...As a result of the transformation of several specific meaning schemes connected with her role as the traditional housewife, she comes to question her own identity as predicated on previously assumed sex roles. (1990a, p. 13)

Mezirow observed that this kind of process was occurring with thousands of women undergoing “consciousness-raising” through the women’s movement, but had “never found its way into the literature of adult education” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 102). Although this shift in perceptions of gender roles must be viewed as particular to a critical period in American history (Clark & Wilson, 1991), Mezirow has consistently argued that such perspective transformation is the “cardinal dimension of adult development” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 100), as well as a uniquely adult process.<sup>4</sup> Although Mezirow has at times backed away from some of his original assertions due to valuable critique, his intention was that transformational learning theory be a “comprehensive, idealized and universal model consisting of generic structures, elements, and processes of adult learning” (1994, p. 222).

Within Mezirow’s theory, adult learning and development, perspective transformation, and the search for meaning are very closely related. This assertion has not been contested; indeed, some transformational learning authors such as Daloz (1986) view the need to make meaning as the fundamental motive for learning in adult learning and development. “We develop,” he writes, “by progressively taking apart and putting together the structures that give our lives meaning” (Daloz, 1986, p. 236). Similarly, Kegan writes, “[T]he activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making” (1982, p. 11). Thus, Mezirow is in good company when he writes that the search for meaning is “the *sine qua non* of the human condition. [W]e move as consistently as we can towards perspectives that are more inclusive and discriminating and that integrate our experience” (Mezirow, 1978a, p. 11).<sup>5</sup> To move towards such perspectives

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<sup>4</sup> There is good reason to question the “uniquely adult” dimension of transformational learning (Taylor, 2007), but this particular question is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>5</sup> Also, Merriam & Caffarella (1999, p. 320): “No need is more fundamentally human than our need to understand the meaning of our experience.”

requires that we not simply apply old meanings to new experience, but rather that “we interpret an old experience (or a new one) from a new set of expectations” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 11).

### *Structures of Meaning*

Mezirow introduced a set of terms with his theory that have remained in relatively consistent usage throughout the ensuing decades, including “meaning perspectives” (also called “frames of reference,” the term Freire used), “habits of mind,” and “points of view.”<sup>6</sup> Because of their centrality to the theory of perspective transformation, they are described at some length here.

“Meaning perspectives” are webs of psychocultural assumptions and expectations through which we filter what we see in the world (Mezirow, 2000), and within which new experiences are assimilated and transformed by past experience (Mezirow, 1978a, 1985). They establish the criteria by which we identify what is interesting, which problems are of concern to us, what we are prepared to learn and from whom, determining values, setting priorities for action, and “for defining the meaning and direction of self-fulfillment and personal success” (Mezirow, 1978a, p. 11). Meaning perspectives are by definition stabilizing structures. They anchor our sense of self, providing us with a “sense of stability, coherence, community, and identity. Consequently they are often emotionally charged and strongly defended...viewpoints that call our [meaning perspectives] into question may be dismissed as distorting, deceptive, ill-intentioned, or crazy” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 18). For this reason, meaning perspectives are like a “double edged sword” because “whereby they give meaning (validation) to our experiences...at the same time [they] skew our reality” (Taylor, 1998, p. 7).

There are two dimensions to a meaning perspective; “habits of mind” and “points of view” (Mezirow, 2000). “Habits of mind” are “assumptions that act as filters for interpreting the meaning of experience” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17). Examples of habits of mind are conservatism

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<sup>6</sup> The terms “frame of reference” and “meaning perspective” are used interchangeably in the literature. Somewhat arbitrarily, this work typically utilizes the term “meaning perspective.”

vs. liberalism, ethnocentricity, introversion vs. extroversion, and so on (Mezirow, 2000, p. 18).

There are six types of habits of mind, which may have “cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 16). They may also overlap and interact with each other:

- Epistemic (how we know things and the way we use that knowledge)
- Sociolinguistic (how we view social norms, culture, community, how we use language)
- Psychological (our self-concepts, personality, emotional responses, personal images and dreams)
- Moral-ethical (our conscience and morality)
- Philosophical (religious doctrine or world view)
- Aesthetic (our tastes and standards of beauty) (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17)

“Points of view” are made up of “meaning schemes,” which are sets of “immediate, specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and value judgments” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 18). Both points of view and meaning schemes are tangible expressions of habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000). Points of view may be “inferential, based on repetitive emotional interactions and established outside our awareness” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 20), but they may be easier to change than habits of mind, because we tend to be more aware of them (Mezirow, 1997). Examples of points of view would be stereotypes we hold about a particular ethnic group (Mezirow, 1997) or a sequence of events in history.

According to Mezirow (2000, p. 19), transformations occur in one of four ways within the two domains of instrumental and communicative learning:

- Elaborating existing [meaning perspectives]
- Learning new [meaning perspectives]
- Transforming points of view
- Transforming habits of mind

Transformational learning, then, is the process by which we transform our meaning perspectives, habits of mind, and/or points of view to make them more “inclusive, discriminating, open,

emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7). Because we uncritically assimilate our meaning structures from our culture and context during childhood, we are often unaware of their origin, and therefore we “are caught in our own history and reliving it,” which is ultimately detrimental to our personal development and growth (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 101). These meaning structures can be reified dominant narratives within society or psychological structures arising from our personal upbringing.<sup>7</sup> With perspective transformation, we become “critically aware of the absurdity of living out our lives without challenging the roles we play in meeting our assigned tasks and meeting social expectations” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 101).

The outcomes suggested by transformational learning theory, and found in a wide variety of studies (Taylor, 1998), include greater self-directedness and self-confidence (Mezirow, 2000), “service to others” (Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 2000; Baumgartner, 2002); intercultural awareness (King, 2003), and many other typically positive outcomes (Taylor, 2007). Indeed, a disposition towards transformative learning may itself become a frame of reference, a dispositional orientation (Mezirow, 2003a). The less positive outcomes of transformational learning are discussed in the section on transformational learning and crisis.

### *Process of Transformational Learning*

Perspective transformation as elucidated by Mezirow (2000, p. 22) entails ten phases, which are not necessarily sequential:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions

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<sup>7</sup> Reified structures are seen as “immutable, or God-given and beyond human control. As such, they are falsely perceived ideologies and often foster dependency relationships which constrain effective participation in dialogue. These distorting ideologies may be sexual, racial, religious, economic, political, occupational, psychological, or technological. As such they are often reinforced by social institutions; they become institutionalized. They become manifest in a constellation of specific meaning schemes involving rules, roles, relationships, and social expectations which govern the way we see, feel, think, and act” (Mezirow, 1985, p. 144-145).

4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective

These ten phases comprise three central processes precipitated by the disorienting dilemma: reflection, discourse, and action. Each of these is described next in some detail.

### *Disorienting Dilemma*

A "disorienting dilemma" (also referred to as a "trigger event") is "encountering something that is discrepant with how we understand ourselves or the world" (Cranton, n.d.). They may present in a manner akin to Betty Friedan's "problem without a name," or through the more recognizable "existential challenges of adulthood" (Mezirow, 1981, p. 8), or in situations of personal or societal crisis (Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998; 2000; King, 2003). They are often seen as key turning points in one's life, though this may only be visible in retrospect.

Most studies utilizing Mezirow's theory as a framework have confirmed the importance of a disorienting dilemma for perspective transformation (Taylor, 2000), although the severity of the disorienting dilemma varies widely among studies. Many have viewed the disorienting dilemma as a specific, even traumatic, event, although "[g]enerally they do not appear as a sudden, life-threatening event; instead they are more subtle and less profound, providing an opportunity for exploration and clarification of past experiences" (Taylor, 2000, p. 299). Whether disorienting dilemmas are "epochal," or "incremental" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 21), they are given the term "disorienting" because they challenge the perspectives with which one views oneself and the world. They may affect any and all domains of a person's life, making her feel as if "the bottom has fallen out of the bucket....Initially we feel a terrible sense of loss as we

watch the water pour away, but then we create new meaning” (Cranton & Roy, 2003, p. 86).<sup>8</sup>

Mezirow recognized that disorienting dilemmas are often painful, because our sense of self is strongly anchored in our frame of reference (2000), and disorienting dilemmas “often call into question deeply held personal values and threaten our very sense of self” (1991, p. 168).<sup>9</sup> They can cause intense forms of intrapsychic conflict (Coleman, 2003), or internal conflict and perplexity (Brookfield, 1994). They often arouse “tremendous emotional responses,” such as anger, panic, depression, devastation, and thoughts of suicide (Courtenay et al, 1998, Initial Reaction Section, para. 3). There may be feelings of isolation and “cultural suicide” (Cranton & Roy, 2003, p. 92), and a sense of there being a “meaning vacuum” where “awareness is empty, narrow, deconstructed, and focused on the immediate present” (Baumeister, 1991, p. 247). In answer to the profoundly difficult emotional experience touched off by disorienting dilemmas, some researchers have argued that the grieving process is integral to transformation (e.g., Scott, 1997), while others have studied processes of grieving by utilizing transformational learning theory (e.g., Brendel, 2009).

Only a few authors have applied transformative learning theory to disorienting dilemmas of extreme societal crisis (e.g. King, 2003; Salazar, 2008), and it appears that none have applied it to genocide. However, the theory base seems to be very promising in this regard: extreme crises drive profound searches for meaning, as with Victor Frankl’s well-known reflections on life in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. In his 1959 book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Frankl observes several phases camp inmates pass through in the quest to make meaning of their seemingly meaningless suffering, concluding with the words of Nietzsche: “He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How” (p. 76, capitals in original). Because

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<sup>8</sup> Courtenay et al (1998; 2000) distinguish between the disorienting dilemma and the meaning making process by writing of an “initial reaction” (akin to Cranton and Roy’s [2003] “bottom falling out of the bucket”), and some days, months, or years later a “catalytic” experience or event, which touches off the meaning making process. This is an important distinction which will be discussed at more length in the section entitled “Transformative Learning and Crisis.”

<sup>9</sup> Mezirow concluded in his original study that disorienting dilemmas caused by external sources were more likely to lead to perspective transformation because they were non-negotiable (1978a).

disorienting dilemmas precipitated by such extreme crisis are crucial to this study, they are discussed in depth in the “Transformative learning and Crisis” section later in this review.

### *Reflection*

The disorienting dilemma cannot be understood or integrated using old meaning structures, so it precipitates a process of reflecting on those structures and their origins. Critical reflection has been shown in most studies and models to be a key component of perspective transformation (Taylor, 2000; Merriam et al, 2007). As Criticos (1993, p. 162) observed, effective learning does not follow so much from the experience itself, but from effective reflection on it. The learner “becomes aware of the ways cultural assumptions and their psychological consequences have placed their stamp on her” and not only begins to “see herself as the hapless player of socially prescribed roles” (Mezirow, 1978a, p. 11), but “comes to identify her personal problem as a common one and [perhaps even] a public issue” (Mezirow, 1978a, p. 15).

Mezirow (1991) designated three distinct types of reflection, named “content reflection” (examining the content of the problem itself), “process reflection” (examining the process around the problem and how to handle it), and “premise reflection” (examining the premises that underlie the problem, such as assumptions, beliefs, and values about the problem). With Mezirow’s theory, only premise reflection leads to transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991; Merriam, 2004; Taylor, 2007).<sup>10</sup> As Mezirow states, the transformation process “always involves critical reflection upon the distorted premises sustaining our structure of expectation” (1991, p. 167). Critical reflection is of two types: “Objective reframing” involves critical reflection on the assumptions of others, whereas “subjective reframing” involves critical reflections of one’s own assumptions (Brookfield, 2000). Such reflection may involve reflection

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that although empirical research continually demonstrates how essential critical reflection is to transformative learning, there is a tendency in this research to treat all forms of reflection in much the same manner (Taylor, 2007), and to be “too generous” in assuming the presence of premise reflection, and the ability of respondents to recall or articulate critical thought in assessing their transformative learning (Taylor, 2007, p. 186).

on premises about ourselves (narrative), about the cultural systems in which we live (systemic), our workplace (organizational), our ethical decision-making (moral-ethical) or our feelings and dispositions (therapeutic), or the way one learns, as with adult education programs (Mezirow, 2000, p. 23).<sup>11</sup>

Critical reflection, and therefore transformational learning, “can happen only through taking the perspective of others who have a more critical awareness of the psychocultural assumptions which shape our histories and experience” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 109).<sup>12</sup> This process cannot simply be role taking, as it has to be based on the recognition that the adopted point of view is not one’s own (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 104). A learner must be able to have a *perspective about his own perspective* to undergo transformational learning (Mezirow, 2003b, p. 61, emphasis added). Because of the importance of perspective-taking, most authors in transformational learning have treated reflection as a mostly (if not entirely) cognitive process. As Merriam argues, “mature cognitive development is foundational to engaging in the critical reflection and rational discourse necessary for transformative learning” (2004, p. 65).

There are multiple critiques of Mezirow’s theory that pertain specifically to his conceptualization of critical reflection, including his focus on the individual to the neglect of context and his privileging of rational vs. other ways of knowing. He has also been criticized for delinking his concept of critical reflection from critical theory, the tradition from which he purportedly drew his theory (Brookfield, 2000). These critiques are covered in the section entitled “Further Development of Mezirow’s Theory.”

### *Discourse*

As Mezirow contends, we may succeed in becoming critically reflective of our assumptions or those of others, but in order to actually effect a transformation in perspective, we

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<sup>11</sup> Cranton (n.d.) refers to the first as “critical reflection” and the second as “critical self-reflection.”

<sup>12</sup> However, critical reflection is only seen as essential to transformational learning, not sufficient. Assumptions can be exactly the same even after critical reflection (Brookfield, 2000)



need to justify our new perspective through discourse. Discourse is the process through which we attempt to “monitor subjective biases and personal motivations in evaluating assumptions and the validity of arguments for and against problematic assertions in an effort to reach consensus” (1994, p. 225). In such discourse, “we suspend our a priori judgment about the value of an idea and let the weight of evidence and the better argument establish or negate its validity...Consensus determines validity in this kind of discourse, and validity is based on cogency of arguments alone” (Mezirow, 1985, p. 143). Mezirow draws this conception of discourse from Habermas’ notion of “ideal discourse,” whereby communication is unconstrained and free of ideological distortion, and where individuals can be truly authentic (Tennant, 2005, p. 105). There are key conditions for an individual to participate fully in ideal discourse, including:

- Accurate and complete information.
- Freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception.
- Openness to alternative points of view: empathy and concern about how others think and feel.
- Ability to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively.
- Awareness of the context of ideas and reflectiveness of assumptions, including their own.
- Equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse.
- Willingness to seek understanding and agreement and accept a resulting best judgment as a test of validity until new perspectives, evidence or arguments are encountered and validated through discourse as yielding a better judgment (Mezirow, 2000, p. 13).

The essential condition for a statement to be found valid is the “potential agreement of all others with whom one could ever hold a dialogue” (McCarthy, 1982, as cited in Mezirow, 1985, p. 143). Mezirow expanded on this condition (1990, p. 11): “Ideally, the consensus would be such that any informed, objective, and rational person who examined the evidence and heard the arguments would agree, much as it is assumed in a court case that one juror may be replaced by

another, but the jury's decision would be the same."<sup>13</sup> If an idea is too revolutionary, it will not be accepted or validated (Mezirow, 2000).<sup>14</sup>

Mezirow acknowledges that these "ideal conditions for discourse are never attainable in reality, but that they should be used as a standard against which to judge efforts to free discourse from the distortions of power and influence" that are typical. (1994, p. 225). Such ideal conditions do appear to motivate much of the theory and practice around transformational learning in institutionalized settings, where practitioners strive to break down the barriers between themselves and learners (Taylor, 2007). In the absence of discourse to justify a belief (or to at least provide the (unattainable) standard against which efforts can be judged), Mezirow argues that the only alternatives are "to appeal to tradition, authority, or force" (2000, p. 9). This argument is quite problematic from the standpoint of this study, and is discussed at more length below.

### *Action*

As both Mezirow's ten stages of perspective transformation, as discussed above, and the early origins of his theory in Freire's conception of social emancipation show, Mezirow has claimed that "action" is a critical part of the transformative learning process, yet his conceptualization of "action" has lacked clarity and there has been much debate about what constitutes "action" in transformative learning theory. Mezirow's earliest (1978a) assertion of this key concept stated that "the transformation process involves planning a course of action, acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans, and finally a reintegration into society on one's own terms with a new, inner-directed stance" (p. 7). Mezirow also states that "[p]ersonal problems can be seen as having their counterpart in public issues, and these call for

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<sup>13</sup> The naiveté of this assertion has inspired critique from Clark and Wilson (1991) and others. If jurists were not so clearly subjective in reality, jury selection would not be such a critical issue in trial law.

<sup>14</sup> Kegan (1994) observes that some people have achieved such a high level of consciousness that they are "out ahead of their culture." Yet we cannot say that they do not undergo perspective transformation in the absence of validation from their culture.

both individual and collective action” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 103). In later work, (2000, p. 24), Mezirow asserts that, “action that results from reflective insight may be immediate, delayed, or reasoned affirmation of an existing pattern of action.” In other words, it may not be “action” in the strict sense of the term, and it may not be “collective” either.

Not surprisingly, Mezirow’s conception of perspective transformation has been critiqued for focusing so much on individual transformation that it provides an “inadequate and false sense of emancipation” (Inglis, 1997 p. 6). Inglis (1998, p. 77) argues that unless it is “tied into a critical realist analysis of the way power produces knowledge, and of how assumptions and conventional understanding are built into the strategies of and tactics through which power is sought and maintained,” cultural action [in transformative learning] is “limited.” It may be true that Mezirow’s theory does not adequately develop how perspective transformation on the individual level can or does drive social change. However, critiques of transformative learning theory from the critical realism tradition are nearly always theoretical rather than practical elucidations of how transformative learning “works” within social change. In particular, such critiques seem poorly applied to the Rwandan context, where sociopolitical space is so constricted as to limit critical discourse and/or political action. It may be that in such contexts different forms of social action must be recognized. Thus, for the purposes of this study, Mezirow’s conception of “action” is not seen as problematic: It may reflect inner or outer work; it may be delayed or muted in its expression; and it may be little more than an embodied attitude, which itself may transform situations more than theorists have recognized. Certainly if learning has trans-generational effects, its timing may work outside the temporal expectations of transformational learning theory.

#### *Further Development of Transformational Learning Theory*

While Mezirow’s theory of transformational learning has had a sizable impact on the study of adult education (Taylor, 2007), it has from its beginning sustained regular critiques on a number of issues. These critiques have led to further elaborations of the theory and alternative

conceptions of transformative learning by a number of authors, although Mezirow's conception is by far the most researched (Taylor, 2007).<sup>15</sup> In Taylor's well-known reviews of the literature on transformational learning theory (1997, 1998, 2000, 2007, and 2008), he has identified a number of ongoing debates and issues in transformational learning. These include such issues as promoting transformational learning in the classroom, the role of relationships in the process, "the varying nature of the catalysts of transformative learning" (1998, p. 175), the components and process of Mezirow's model, and the assertion that the theory is universal, among others. The areas of critique and subsequent development that are of most relevance to the study are discussed below, and include:

1. What constitutes perspective transformation?
2. Context and power in transformational learning
3. Rational and other ways of knowing<sup>16</sup>
4. Culture and transformational learning
5. Spirituality and transformational learning
6. Transformational learning and crisis

### *What Constitutes Transformation?*

Mezirow (1991) defined perspective transformation as a "fundamental reordering of assumptions" in one's meaning perspective, habit of mind or points of view, although in drawing his term from a study where perspective transformation seemed so clear, he did not seem to foresee the need to clarify what is *not* transformation. There are two areas in which clarity is lacking: the usage of the term "transformation," and the empirical evidence for the phenomenon in practice (Taylor, 2000).

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor (2005, p. 459) summarizes seven lenses through which to view transformational learning theories, from which two categories emerge based on their assumed "locus of learning." The first group assumes an individual locus of learning, and includes psychocritical (e.g. Mezirow), psycho-developmental (e.g. Daloz) and psychoanalytical (e.g. Boyd) perspectives. The second group assumes a sociocultural locus of learning, and includes socio-emancipatory (e.g. Freire), cultural-spiritual (e.g. Tisdell), race-centric (e.g. Sheared, 1994), and planetary (e.g. O'Sullivan) approaches.

<sup>16</sup> For lack of a better term, "other ways of knowing" is chosen over definition by negation (i.e. non-rational).

The term “transformation” has been used in so many differing contexts that it has become “evacuated” of its original meaning, and reified (Brookfield, 2000, p. 140), and has taken on “quasi-religious qualities,” as with conversion (Kegan, 2000, p. 47). Stripped of its original emancipatory import, which was derived from critical theory (Brookfield, 2000), it has come to “refer to any kind of change or process at all” (Kegan, 2000, p. 47). Indeed, restoring the term “transformation” to its proper place is one of the primary justifications for this study in post-genocide reconciliation, as the term “transformation” is used often in peacebuilding and reconciliation literatures without any conceptual development. As Kegan argues, “transformation should not refer to just any kind of change, even to any kind of dramatic, consequential change” (Kegan, 2000, p. 49). A learner can have profound changes in her fund of knowledge; her self-confidence and self-perception as a learner; her motives for learning; her self-esteem, and all of these would be very important and desirable. Yet all of them can occur within an existing frame of reference (Kegan, 2000, p. 50). To be transformative, Kegan (2000) argues, there must be epistemological change (i.e. changes in *how* we know), not only behavioral change or increases in quantity or depth of knowledge. According to Kegan’s argument, “form” is a way of knowing – without a change in form, there can be no transformation.

In practice, however, transformations in meaning perspectives can be very difficult to determine, partly because meaning perspectives themselves are “illusive” and “lack a strong empirical foundation” (Taylor, 2000, p. 292), and in any case may only be seen in retrospect after transformation has occurred. Taylor describes this difficulty as he reflects on Whalley’s (1995) study of sojourners:

Students in general found meaning schemes hard to identify because of their habitual nature, indicative of a kind of learning that often occurs outside the awareness of the learner. However, when his sojourners began to experience cultural difference, the meaning scheme became more lucid” (Taylor, 2000, p. 293).

The problem of identifying meaning perspectives is compounded when we realize there may be multiple levels of perception at which they operate, as with Kilgore and Bloom’s account of

women in crisis who they argue viewed the crisis through certain crisis “master scripts” they uncritically relied upon to express themselves (2002, p. 128).<sup>17</sup>

### *Context and Power in Transformational Learning*

Mezirow has been critiqued for locating perspective transformation entirely within the individual learner while ignoring the importance of social context, and especially the role of power (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Newman, 1994; Hart, 1985; Pietrykowski, 1998; McDonald, 1999). This critique began with Clark and Wilson’s (1991) analysis of Mezirow’s original study, in which the perspective transformation of individual women was highlighted “as if they stood apart from their historical and sociocultural context, thereby limiting our understanding of the full meaning of those experiences” (p. 78). As Clark and Wilson point out, “In the process of attempting to construe meaning from experience through critical reflection and rational discourse, Mezirow systematically seeks to remove the very element which brings meaning to experience: context.” Mezirow treats context (i.e. which gives us our culturally and biographically-derived meaning perspectives) as if it is *distortive* of meaning, while Clark and Wilson (1991) view it as “*constitutive* of meaning and therefore crucial for interpreting experience.” (p. 76, emphasis added). Clark and Wilson also critiqued Mezirow’s theory for assuming a psychological and highly decisional conception of the self, where human agency is assumed to be at least potentially more powerful than any “inhibiting influences” from the context (1991, p. 80). Thus, having built a theory on Freire’s radical pedagogy and critical theory (via Habermas), Mezirow stripped his own theory of its critical origins. As Brookfield argues (2000), ideology critique is a crucial component of truly emancipatory education. Hart (1990) and others (e.g. Inglis, 1997; McDonald, 1999; Cervero and Wilson, 1999; Pietrykowski, 1998) have long argued that an analysis of power belongs at the center of the theory.

Mezirow continually responded to these critiques by agreeing that contextual forces may

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<sup>17</sup> Kilgore and Bloom (2002) found such perspective transformations to be “short-lived” (p. 127), partially due to the “radical impossibility of teaching” (Felman, 1987, as cited in Kilgore and Bloom [2002]) in a mandated educational environment.

impede or encourage critical reflection and reflective discourse, but without ever integrating power into the theory on a conceptual level (Inglis, 1997; McDonald, 1999). Yet, most of this ongoing discussion was theoretical, up until 1999 when McDonald published her study of the effects of power on transformational learning among ethical vegans. McDonald (1999) employed Hart's (1985) three levels of communicative distortions to show how power relations at the interpersonal and socio-cultural levels blocked transformational learning and emancipatory praxis among ethical vegans. Although individuals transformed their meaning perspectives in ways reflective of Mezirow's emphasis on individual transformation (Hart's intrapersonal level), they did so in the face of enormous interpersonal and socio-cultural challenges, raising the question of whether such transformation is actually emancipatory. McDonald (1999) summarizes:

A more in-depth reading of the transformational learning of ethical vegans also reveals their journey as dynamic. They do not, as transformation theory suggests, become reintegrated into society with a transformed and static, albeit transformed, meaning perspective. Instead, these ethical vegans continued to change their intrapersonal and interpersonal understandings and relationships. As they became more committed to the vegan perspective (an intrapersonal phenomena), they became *less* outspoken about it in their personal relationships (an interpersonal phenomena) (McDonald, 1999, Power Operates Across Interrelated Scales section, para. 1, emphasis added).

McDonald (1999) also found that transformative learning “runs the risk of becoming a mechanism for *self-control*...evident in the gradual social conformance of vegans, even as their personal commitment increased” (McDonald, 1999, Ideological Limitations section, para. 2).<sup>18</sup> Therefore, she argues, “understanding how power operates and resisting its subtle regulation to conformity” must be incorporated into transformational learning theory (Limits of

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<sup>18</sup> The reference to self-control in McDonald (1999) is to Inglis' (1997) analysis of emancipation vs. empowerment, which is based in part on Foucault's (1991) views on power. Kilgore & Bloom (2002) also refer to self-control, more specifically that “What is endeavored for women in crisis fundamentally seems to be a transformation from the undisciplined to the disciplined self” (p. 131), although they do not cite Foucault. In Foucault's conception of power, there has been a shift from external forms of control (e.g., torture, punishment, prisons, education) to more subtle forms of control in the production of docile, “regulated bodies” (Inglis, 1997). “Through an ongoing process of externalizing, problematizing, and critically evaluating one's being, actions, and thoughts, a critically reflective self is constituted. This self becomes the center of control” (Inglis, 1997, para. 15).

Transformation Theory section, para. 1). This mechanism of self-control was also seen in a different manner by Kilgore and Bloom (2002) in their study of women in a mandated crisis program. While these women expressed themselves in language that suggested perspective transformation had taken place, they did so using masculinist “master scripts,” reflecting their ability to hold many contradictory perspectives in order to survive.

Inglis (1997) draws on Bourdieu’s (1997) theory of power to provide a helpful distinction that is related to this problem of personal transformation leading to greater self-control rather than liberation, when he writes that emancipation is “critically analyzing, resisting, and challenging structures of power,” while empowerment “involves people developing the capacities to act successfully within the existing system and structures of power” (1997, para. 6). Therefore, Inglis “challenges the notion [that] freedom and emancipation [can be] attained through personal transformation” (Inglis, 1997, para. 1), and in this challenge he is far from the only critic. Indeed, Inglis captures here the most serious and enduring criticism of Mezirow’s theory, which is that it continues to focus on personal rather than social transformation, a critique Mezirow has not generated a consistent response to (as discussed earlier).<sup>19</sup>

This discussion naturally hinges on theories of power and subjectivity, which Mezirow has failed to integrate into the theory in a meaningful manner. Kilgore and Bloom (2002) argue that Mezirow fails to recognize the non-unitary self in his theory because his theory is derived from the Enlightenment view on subjectivity, where the self has an “essential, seamless, unified, autonomous, coherent, and fixed core” (p. 129). Postmodernists and feminists have contested this assumption of an essential inner human nature. The former reject humanist notions of a foundational self and therefore the pursuit of self-directedness that transformational theory implies (Clark and Wilson, 1991), while the latter argue for a non-unitary self, which is always in a process of being produced and transformed through the fragmentation of conflicts and

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<sup>19</sup> However, as helpful as Inglis’ (1997) distinction of empowerment and emancipation is, it does not offer suggestions as to any sort of dynamic or longer-range relationship between emancipation and empowerment. Empowerment may be more available for Rwandans than emancipation, but it is possible that through empowerment, there is a longer-range emancipatory process at work also.



contradictions (Kilgore and Bloom, 2002). In this view, many contradictory states of mind and perspectives can be held at once by the self, which does not conform to notions of rationality (Kilgore & Bloom, 2002), yet this is not an outright rejection of the possibility of personal transformation. The debate about a unitary vs. non-unitary self underlies *all* theories and studies of adult learning, but it is particularly important in studies on transformational learning because of the important tension between transformation of self and society in the theory. Any stance on the matter provides a lens through which we can view self and society, but is not empirically provable. This particular study utilizes the lens of the non-unitary self, recognizing that selves constitute and are constituted by structure.<sup>20</sup>

Yet, even if one assumes a unitary essential self, Mezirow's theory "ignores the problem of asymmetrical relationships" in reflective discourse when in reality "most human relationships are asymmetrical" (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 73). This is a major shortcoming of the theory, as Mezirow predicates the entire theory on "ideal discourse," which must be free of distortions of power, but which he agrees do not exist in reality (2000, p. 13). Despite Mezirow's failure to address this problem with, for example, a model of power distortions similar to Hart's (1985), research utilizing his model continues, perhaps because perspective transformations can and do occur in contexts of considerably less than ideal discourse. That perspective transformations occur in the absence of ideal discourse may indicate the importance of non-critical (indeed non-cognitive) processes within transformative learning.

### *Rational and Other Ways of Knowing*

Mezirow's theory of transformational learning is clearly based in Western ideas of the self and society, as evidenced by Mezirow's own statement on the matter:

This theory is derived from culturally specific conditions associated with democratic societies and with the development of adult education as a vocation in Western Europe and North America, a liberal tradition that depends ultimately on faith in informed, free

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<sup>20</sup> This is what Inglis (1997, para. 3) refers to as "weak" structuralism, whereby "discourse and practice pre-exist us, [but] we learn to harness them to our own end."

human choice and social justice. Rationality, self-awareness, and empathy are assumed values. Transformative theory shares the normative goals of the Enlightenment of self-emancipation through self-understanding, the overcoming of systematically distorted communication, and the strengthening of the capacity for self-determination through rational discourse” (Mezirow, 2000, p. xiv).<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps because Mezirow made such all-encompassing statements of individual *and* social change in his earlier works, there has been quite a bit of discussion about surfacing the underlying assumptions of Mezirow’s theory, namely “the hegemonic American values of individualism, rationality, and autonomy” (Clark & Wilson, 1991, p. 80).<sup>22</sup>

Yet the grounding of transformative learning in individualism and rationalism is overly constrained, and many authors have contributed to a much more expanded view on the process. As discussed in the previous section, alternate conceptions of self and society have provided consistent debate in the theory, and those will not be repeated here. However, alternative views on rationality and other ways of knowing have been another major area of debate and expansion of the theory, and in fact is one of the areas Taylor (1997, 1998, 2007) consistently identifies as needing further research.<sup>23</sup>

Rationality is associated in Western thought with cognitive development, and indeed most of the stage models of adult development link cognitive development with greater capacity and consciousness (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Perry, 1970). Yet as Merriam (2004) notes, the originator of the theory base, Paulo Freire, worked mostly with peasants who could hardly have

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<sup>21</sup> In the same work (2000), Mezirow writes, “Because this theory particularly addresses the interests of adult education, as this vocation has evolved in the West, it assumes the perfectability of human beings when this refers to improving our understanding and the quality of our actions through meaningful learning” (p. 8).

<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, self-determination in Mezirow’s theory is a distinctly psychological process, as Clark and Wilson (1991) note, and as is indicated by the many authors writing on the psychodynamic aspects of transformational learning (e.g., Dirkx, 2006; Cranton; 2000), which are often rooted in Jungian analysis. In particular, the process of individuation, where a person develops as separate from the collective and “joins with others in a more authentic union” is a goal of transformative learning which is clearly “grounded in the conscious development of psychological type” (Cranton, 2000, p. 189). Cranton and Roy (2003, p. 91) quote Jung: “Collective identities such as membership in an organization, support of ‘isms,’ and so on, interfere with the fulfillment of this task. Such collective identities are crutches for the lame, shields for the timid, beds for the lazy, nurseries for the irresponsible. (Jung, 1961, p. 342).”

<sup>23</sup> As an indication, Merriam et al (2007) devoted a whole chapter to it in their most recent edition of *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.).

achieved the most advanced levels of cognitive development. A variety of studies have shown that transformations can occur without conscious critical reflection (Taylor, 1997; Merriam and Ntseane, 2008; Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Dirkx, 1997).<sup>24</sup> Affect has gotten a lot of attention as a primary force (Taylor, 2000; Mulvihill, 2003) of transformational learning. Indeed, Mezirow (2000) acknowledged the role of affect when he wrote, “Cognition has strong affective and conative dimensions; all the sensitivity and responsiveness of the person participates in the invention, discovery, interpretation, and transformation of meaning” (p. 6), although he has not articulated a way in which affect and critical reflection interact. Taylor (2001) explored the literature on neurobiology, concluding that non-conscious memory has a profound influence on how we think and act, and Mulvihill (2003) also integrated neurological literature to show how emotion, learning and memory interact in conversations between clergy abuse survivors and Church representatives, indicating that affect is not at all “the handmaiden of the rational” (p. 3). Taylor (2000) calls for research to move beyond proving the significance of affect and into determining its actual relationship with critical reflection, especially with emotions such as shame and grief.

Other contributions to the discussion on other ways of knowing are the literature on intuition, visions and dreams (Boyd & Dirkx, 1991; Dirkx, 2001a); spiritual knowing (Tisdell, 2000; 2003; 2009), transpersonal dimensions and soul learning (Dirkx, 1997; 2001a; 2006), somatic dimensions of transformational learning (Amann, 2003); stories and storytelling (Rossiter, 2009; Hartz & Miller, 2006); and the importance of relationships in transformational learning (Taylor, 2000). Yet, almost all of these investigations into other ways of knowing still contain biases, especially from Western psychology. For example, many write of the importance of talking through emotions and experiences in transformational learning (e.g., Magro and Polyzois, 2009; King, 2003), but this itself comes from Western assumptions about the importance of self-disclosure, which may or may not be important transformative learning

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<sup>24</sup> Scott (1997) notes that the process of transformation is viewed differently between social theorists and depth psychologists, the former focusing on critical reflection and the latter on discernment (p. 46).

processes in non-Western cultures.

An important area of critique on the privileging of rationality in transformational learning comes from the feminist critique of learning theories that are drawn from studies on men, yet applied to women as if they are universal (Clark & Wilson, 1991). Even though Mezirow's initial research was actually conducted with women, it drew on a masculinist tradition which equates individualism, linear thinking, and self sufficiency with development (Belenky et al, 1986; Rossiter, 2009). Yet as various feminist scholars have shown, women may follow a different development pattern (Gilligan, 1982; Chodorow, 1978). Belenky et al (1986), seeing that Perry's (1970) developmental theory did not adequately represent the voices of many women, developed the framework of "women's ways of knowing" which has five major epistemological categories for meaning-making. There are many important contributions of this model, but the most important one for this research is the epistemological category of "connected knowing," which plays the "believing game" of seeking understanding in dialogue, rather than critique (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). Empathy, imagination, storytelling are all important to understanding why a person might feel or think the way they do. A connected knower knows she will never understand the other by judging the idea before it comes to fruition, or by shooting it down once it does. In such a context, some ideas will never come to light (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). Noddings (1984) also writes about this other kind of knowing:

I set aside my temptation to analyze and to plan. I do not project; I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality. I am not thus caused to see or to feel...for I am committed to the receptivity that permits me to see and to feel in this way. The seeing and feeling are mind, but only partly and temporarily mind, as on loan to me (as cited in Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 87)

The importance of connected knowing in a context where there are great power differentials (as there are in Rwanda) is that the believing game can be played by anyone, no matter how immature or silenced they are, whereas critical discourse is played on an unlevel playing field (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 89).

Extending women's ways of knowing further, the Stone Center's Relational-Cultural Model (Jordan, Walker, & Hartling 2004) also provides meaningful conceptual development for this study, as it assumes meaning and well-being come from relation, that healing occurs in growth-fostering connection, and where *mutual empathy* is *empowering* to both parties because it allows each to gain in "relational effectiveness," thus re-entering them into the "human community." This model can be applied on individual or societal levels, and across a variety of relations. As Jordan writes:

While some have stressed the loss of control and of meaningfulness in victimization...I think more particularly that in instances of trauma involving violation by another person, we lose our trust in the goodness of others; we do not see another human being who responds to us in an empathic, responsive, and caring way... we lose even our hope that there can ever again be a fully empathic, loving relationship with another person (Jordan et al, 2004, p. 38).

Being able to "move" others, to find responsiveness in them, to effect change and to create movement together is a "vital part of good connection" (Jordan et al, 2004, p. 5). Without mutual empathy, a disconnection of inner and outer worlds occurs, leading to strategies of disconnection, shame and humiliation, diminished authenticity, a sense of vulnerability in the world, and silencing on both interpersonal and societal levels (Jordan, 2001; Jordan et al, 2004). Indeed, the Stone Center's conceptualization of transformation rests on relational integration:

Unlike resilience, transformation suggests not just a return to a previous existing state but movement through and beyond stress or suffering into a new and more comprehensive personal and relational integration. In the case of disconnection, transformation involves awareness of the forces creating the disconnection, discovery of a means for reconnecting, and building a more differentiated and solid connection. The movement into and out of connection becomes a journey of discovery about self, other, and relationship, about 'being in relation.' The importance of connectedness is affirmed, and one's capacity to move into healthy connection is strengthened. This is indeed transformative (Jordan et al, 2004, p. 42).

Thus, in this particular study it is important to consider transformational learning that rests not only on extrarational processes, but on the relational and empathetic aspects of learning. These aspects are crucial not only because of the constrained sociopolitical space in Rwanda

(which severely limits critical discourse), but also because relational connection is very important in Rwandan culture. Additionally, Rwandans themselves acknowledge the need for empathetic engagement, and post-conflict reconciliation theory and practice on the inter-personal and inter-communal levels considers it crucial (as is discussed in the section entitled, Reconciliation Theory below). We next turn to a consideration of culture and transformational learning.

### *Culture and Transformational Learning*

Culture matters so much to any discussion on transformational learning theory because it influences everything we think, feel, and do (Clark-Habibi, 2005). All meaning we make (Clark & Wilson, 1991), and the persons we become (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008), are bound up in context, of which culture is a critical piece. Our “worldviews [are] develop[ed] in the contexts of family, religion, culture, and school, and are additionally shaped by the political environment, media, and our personal life experiences” (Clark-Habibi, 2005, p. 39). Although Mezirow clearly acknowledges that “our frames of reference often represent cultural paradigms (collectively held frames of reference) (2000, p. 16), he defaults to the Western rationalistic, individualistic paradigm when he argues that “cultures vary greatly in the opportunities they provide for perspective-taking,” and therefore perspective transformation (1978b, p. 109). In this vein, he argues that some cultures promote a shift in maturity from “organic” social relationships (i.e. “life is lived deeply embedded” in ties to family, class, caste, or local communities) to “contractual” social relationships (i.e., greater emphasis on individual and self-awareness), and that, “one must become dissociated from an organic relationship with society to move along the gradient of perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1978b, p. 106). These statements reflect a very profound Western bias regarding adult development and social relations. In many cultures, including Rwanda’s, movement from embedded social relationships to individuality is not seen as desirable, and from such perspectives the Western “individual” is often viewed as isolated,

unhealthy and lonely.<sup>25</sup>

The importance of culture in transformational learning has been recognized, but is still under researched (Taylor, 2007).<sup>26</sup> This gap in the literature may be due to inadequate understanding of the differences between Western and “non-Western ways of learning and knowing,” and therefore Western and non-Western transformative learning. As Merriam and Associates (2007) observe in their edited volume entitled, *Non-Western Perspectives on Learning and Knowing*, “most of what we know about [adult learning] has been shaped by what counts as knowledge in a Western paradigm. Embedded in this perspective are the cultural values of privileging the individual learner over the collective, and promoting autonomy and independence of thought and action over community and interdependence (p. 1-2).<sup>27</sup> In regards to this particular study, it can be difficult to elucidate exactly what African ways of learning and knowing are, as so much of the African tradition is orally passed, rather than recorded in written form (Fasokun, Katahoire & Oduaran, 2005). African philosophies typically reside in the memories of seniors, or are “embedded in proverbs, myths and folktales, folksongs, rituals, beliefs, customs, and traditions of the people” (Gyekye, 1997, as cited in Nafukho, Amutabi & Otunga, 2005, p. 49). Furthermore, while Westerners seek to justify the absolute and irrefutable truth, Africans seek to understand *why* the truth is the truth: thus, recourse is made to mystical religious performance (Nyamnjoh, 2002, as cited in Fasokun et al, 2005, p. 63). And, as Ntseane (2007) describes, a central feature in African knowledge systems is the importance of living usefully and harmoniously within one’s family, community, and society (p. 114). Included in

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<sup>25</sup> Extracted from expressions of several Rwandans (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009). Also, Nah (2000, cited in Merriam & Associates, 2007b, p. 176) found that interdependence was viewed as a sign of maturity in Korea, while independence was viewed as dysfunctional and self-centered.

<sup>26</sup> There are a number of notable studies of transformational learning in other cultures, such as Marshall’s (1998) study of spirituality among Asian women, Kamis and Muhamed’s (2002) study of reactions to political scandals in Malaysia, and Feinstein’s (2004) study of Hawaiian ecological knowledge. Many studies outside the US (Taylor, 2007), or within multicultural studies in the US do not investigate the relationship of cultural difference to transformational learning (Taylor, 2007). The annual International Conference on Transformative Learning (organized by Columbia University’s Teacher’s College) increasingly includes sessions on the role of culture, although many of them are not full studies.

<sup>27</sup> The dichotomy of Western vs. non-Western ways of knowing is itself a reflection of the Western preoccupation with dichotomies (Merriam & Associates, 2007a).

those circles of African social life are the ancestors and their spirits, who are often invoked to assist in current events (Indabwa and Mpofu, 2005).

Therefore, it is likely that transformational learning in Africa would have quite distinctive features, and indeed this has been borne out by the research on transformative learning in Africa.<sup>28</sup> In Preece's (2003) study of transformational leadership in South Africa she highlights the African concept of *ubuntu*, which became more widely known after Tutu's (1999) popular book on the truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa. *Ubuntu* is the sense that "I am not a human being unless you are a human being" (Tutu, 1999). It embraces connectedness between the spirit world and the human world. It "encompasses respect for human life, mutual help, generosity, cooperation, respect for older people, harmony, and preservation of the sacred. Commitment to humanity includes an obligation to the living and the dead and those yet to be born" (Avoseh, 2001, p.481).<sup>29</sup> Taking these important aspects of African culture into account, Preece (2003) found that spiritual participation entails obligation to ancestors and obligation to care for extended family, and that political participation involves duties to serve the interest of the nation or community, rather than the individual.

The importance of spirituality in the African context is affirmed further by Merriam and Ntseane's (2008) study of transformative learning among adults in Botswana. They found that three specific factors mediated the construction of meaning for these adults: spirituality and the metaphysical world; community responsibility and relationships; and gender roles. These three factors were often interrelated. Spirituality was viewed as having two components: connectedness with ancestral spiritual power, and refuge or ultimate authority (equal to God). Spiritual learning was reflected in the ways they interpreted the disorienting events that touched

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<sup>28</sup> One study that is not discussed at length here, Duveskog and Friis-Hansen (2009), explores transformative learning in Field Farmer Schools in Kenya but does not explore cultural differences in transformative learning.

<sup>29</sup> Beyond the philosophical meaning of *ubuntu* lies also the economic meaning. As with individualism, collectivism entails a moral economy, whereby the distribution of resources is managed. As van Dijk (2006, p. 160) describes, "In practice having 'ubuntu' means sharing your wealth with poorer members of the community. You are expected to do what is in your power to help a person in need." Recall Taylor's (2001) work from Chapter Two, whereby according to the logic of flow and blockage, the violence in Rwanda can be seen as the removal of "blocking beings" who were inappropriately accumulating wealth.



off perspective transformation, and in the way they saw this change as being a “destiny determined by God” (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008, p. 190). Importantly, Merriam and Ntseane also noted the ability of some participants to retain beliefs of multiple traditions alongside each other (e.g. viewing the death of a daughter as the result of “witchcraft” but also seeing the daughter as a “saint”) (p. 194). Elements of culture were also active in the importance of cultural myths, stories, and proverbs to participants’ transformations.

Regarding the process of transformative learning in Merriam and Ntseane’s (2008) study, the disorienting events faced by the study participants were common to people everywhere (e.g. death of a close family member), and the process set in place by it was “loosely isomorphic” with Mezirow’s model (Merriam and Ntseane, 2008, p. 189), but their search for meaning was shaped by the cultural context, and importantly, “only rarely was rational discourse present” (p. 189). Merriam and Ntseane viewed the nature of participants’ transformations as psychological, “in that they questioned their ways of thinking and acting as an adult in the world” (p. 194), notably in regards to challenging cultural assumptions on gender (as would be expected by Mezirow’s theory). Merriam and Ntseane (2008, p. 190) conclude from their study that “transformative learning sits easily with cultures that embrace spirituality, connectedness, and *ubuntu* [or] *botho*,” but that the collectivist orientation of Botswana culture meant that the outcome of the participants’ transformations was not “‘self- empowerment’ or ‘acquiring greater control of one’s life’ (Mezirow, 2000, p. 27), so much as contributing to and bonding with one’s community” (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008, p. 195). Participants generally become “more aware of their interdependent positionality, rather than more discriminating and autonomous” (p. 196).

In another important study that explored transformational learning in the African context, Easton, Monkman, and Miles (2009) explored how transformative learning is understood in the practices of the *Tostan*, a nonformal literacy and empowerment program for women in Senegal. Easton et al (2009) found that major personal decisions or changes are treated as collective matters that have implications for practices at the family and community levels. Therefore for behavior to change (in this case, female genital cutting) in a location where people are so

interlocked and related, buy in must be obtained from a ‘critical mass’ of those concerned (p. 235). They go on to suggest that transformation in this context is less about “being something different” than about “bringing to fruition what is latent within oneself and one’s heritage or community...more a question of internally driven liberation than deliverance” (p. 238). This sense of bringing something latent to fruition is reflected in the metaphorical meaning of Easton, Monkman, and Miles’ title (“Breaking out of the Egg”), speaking to the importance of the seed in many African cultures. Easton et al (2009) emphasize the need to have profound respect for local cultures: “How then shall we best enable people to discover within the seeds of new life that bear and transform their own cultural code?” (p. 238).

Due to the vital connection between between spirituality and culture, especially in the African context, the next section considers important connections between spirituality and transformational learning.

### *Spirituality and Transformational Learning*

Until relatively recently, most discussions of transformational learning have paid little or no attention to the role of spirituality in the process. As Tisdell and Tolliver point out (2003, p. 370), “[T]his is surprising, given that these social transformation discussions are heavily influenced by the pioneering work of Paulo Freire, who was a deeply spiritual man,” and that “Horton and Freire (1990) were clear about the influence of spirituality on their own work” (Tisdell, 2000, para. 6). Furthermore, mainstream academics tend to leave spirituality out of their discussions, despite the importance of spirituality in the lives of many of these same academics (Tisdell, 2000). Tisdell and Tolliver (2003) are two of a growing group of adult educators who are bringing a closer consideration of spirituality to the field of adult education, and to transformational learning theory and practice (e.g., O’Sullivan, 1999; Dirks, 2006; hooks, 2000; Tisdell, 2000; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006).<sup>30</sup> There are several sub-topics of spirituality and

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<sup>30</sup> As Tisdell (2000) observes, there are many authors from outside academia who discuss the importance of image and symbol in constructing and accessing knowledge of spiritual forms. However, nearly all of the authors delving

transformational learning that are of particular importance to this study, and which are discussed next. Beginning with a tentative definition of spirituality, discussion then turns to spirituality and culture; spirituality and commitment to social action; and spirituality and overcoming oppression.

*Defining spirituality.* Tisdell (2000) suggests that the poor coverage of spirituality in adult learning theory may be due to the difficulty in defining the concept of spirituality, and especially confusion of spirituality with religion. Definitions of spirituality and religion differ quite a bit, but generally indicate that spirituality is a sense of connection to a higher power, which brings a variety of feelings and experiences, while religions are “organized communities of faith that often provide meaningful community rituals that serve as a gateway to the sacred” (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006, p. 38). Because all religions have spiritual dimensions to them, the two concepts are interrelated for many people, especially if their spiritual experiences have taken place primarily within their religious communities (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006). Spirituality can feel both positive and constructive, but also like struggle and confrontation with the “shadowy” aspects of human existence (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006, p. 45). It can give one a sense of fearlessness, and far greater strength than ever before (Mahoney & Pargament, 2004). Spirituality often leads to greater empathy for and interconnectedness with others (Courtenay et al, 1998). It can be about developing a more authentic identity, though authentic identity is not to be confused with the unitary essential self (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006). It is integrally involved in processes of meaning-making through symbol, ritual, music, and image (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000; English & Gillen, 2000; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006). This process is culturally derived, and therefore helps create community (hooks, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2006) and an important and protective sense of belonging (Breshears, 2010). Spirituality often arises as a “sense of calling” or vocation, something that one “can’t *not* do” even when it isn’t explicable to

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into this area treat spirituality in a way that privileges the white, middle-class male perspective from the Judeo-Christian traditions.

oneself or to others (Palmer, 2000, p. 25, emphasis added).

It is easy to conclude from all of these ways of describing spirituality that it works outside rationality, and indeed many accounts of spiritual experience are expressed as being beyond the rational. Yet, as Tisdell (2000) found in her study, the rational mind is typically brought to bear when analyzing spiritual experience. It appears that spiritual development may require a rational component when critically reflecting back on spiritual experience and the links between culture, religion of origin, and personal identity (Tisdell, 2000). In related research, Tisdell has gone on to investigate the links between transformative learning, spirituality, and emerging wisdom (2009).

*Spirituality and culture.* The interconnection of culture and spirituality in adult education has been an area of growing discussion, with contributions from hooks (2000), Tisdell and Tolliver (2003), and Tolliver (2000; 2003), among others. Tisdell (2000) in particular makes a strong case for viewing spirituality as a key aspect of culture, and therefore as a key aspect of identity:

Despite having serious issues with structural systems of oppression in their faiths of origin, most of the participants [of the study] were strongly attached to the symbols, music, and some of the rituals from their childhood religious traditions and the conceptual meanings attached to them....as they were rooted in a cultural identity (Tisdell, 2000, Discussion section, para. 4).

One of her study participants says it best:

They [culture and spirituality] are not separate, because what's culture? It's music, it's singing; it's dancing; it's storytelling; it's presentational knowing.... They're both less about what's happening in my head; they're more about what's happening in my body and my heart....Culture is a way to express spirituality; they're very interwoven (Tisdell, 2000, Spirituality as Noncoercive Presence section, para. 2, brackets in original).

It appears that culture and spirituality are inextricably linked, and therefore their intersection is important to this study.

*Spirituality and commitment to social action.* Tisdell (2000; 2003) and Tisdell and Tolliver (2003) have explored in depth the spirituality of a relatively small set of adult educators, finding that spirituality was a key force in sustaining their commitment to social change and their sense of their life's purpose. Kovan and Dirkx (2003) studied environmental activists who are "called awake" by their sense of spirituality to lives of purpose. Similarly, Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks (1996) described the importance of spirituality to people living lives devoted to the common good. Indeed, a number of transformative learning authors have found a sense of one's mission or purpose in life to be an outcome of perspective transformation (e.g., Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Kroth & Boverie, 2000) especially in times of crisis (Courtenay et al, 1998; 2000). Yet, spirituality does not necessarily assure a commitment to social action. Tisdell notes:

[T]here are many adults whose spirituality is important in their lives, but they are not involved in social action efforts, and there are many activists who are atheists or who otherwise find spirituality irrelevant to their lives. Fowler's (1981) answer to why only some adults whose spirituality is important to them are involved in social action efforts whereas others are not would be that they are at different stages of spiritual development (2000, Discussion section, para. 6).<sup>31</sup>

Fowler's answer might also explain why Tisdell and Tolliver (2003) found that even deeply spiritual people are not necessarily able to see cultural oppression or their own role in it.

*Spirituality and overcoming oppression.* There is overlap between the role of spirituality and culture and the overcoming of oppression, especially internalized oppression. Tolliver and Tisdell (2002) summarize this overlap in their abstract: "Cultural identity development is coming to know self as expression of Spirit; oppression causes limited perceptions of self; as people remember their spiritual essence, they can withstand oppression and be motivated to support social transformation." As these same authors note in their 2003 study:

It seems that for all participants in this study, the claiming of the sacred face was key to developing a positive cultural identity and/or facilitating their ongoing spiritual development. Participants discussed the spiritual search for wholeness, by both

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<sup>31</sup> Tisdell bases much of her spiritual development analysis on Fowler (1981), and Wink and Dillon (2002).

embracing their own cultural identity, by dealing with their own internalized oppression, and having the experience of crossing cultures (2003, p. 384).

When one internalizes ideas of being ugly, lazy or inferior for example (as Hutu have in Rwanda), unlearning this form of internalized oppression is often connected to a process that is both spiritual and cultural (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2003). Spirituality can assist in “mediating among...multiple identities and in dealing with internalized oppression” (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2003, p. 379).

### *Transformational Learning and Personal or Societal Crisis*

Beyond the study of learning among adults undergoing perspective transformation as part of adult development trajectories, perspective transformation has been studied in a variety of situations in which the disorienting dilemmas are very disruptive or traumatic. These are situations of “crisis” on either a personal or societal level. Because crises present unique and sustained challenges in transformative learning, the following discussion first outlines existing literature in personal and societal crisis, highlighting especially the literature on violent conflict. It then focuses on particular parts of the transformative learning process, including: the search for meaning; the process of perspective transformation; and alternative transformations in crisis.

*Personal crisis.* The best known among studies of transformative learning in personal crisis is the series of studies on adults dealing with HIV-positive diagnoses (Courtenay et al, 1998, 2000; Baumgartner, 2002; Baumgartner & David, 2009).<sup>32</sup> Other research includes Kilgore & Bloom’s (2002) view on transformational learning among women in mandated crisis programs, and Allison’s (2007) exploration of transformation through adversity and its connection to wisdom.

*Societal crisis.* Several studies wrestle with societal crises of an ethical or moral nature,

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<sup>32</sup> This series of studies has the added advantage of providing longitudinal data on transformative learning, which is one of the weaknesses in the research base of transformational learning (Taylor, 2007).

including Kamis and Muhamed's (2002) research on the effects of public scandals on the religious and cultural sensibilities of Malays in Malaysia; Mulvihill's (2003) study of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church from the perspective of victims of pedophile priests; and Johnson's (2001) inquiry into meaning making among incarcerated sex offenders.

Of particular relevance to this research project, a number of authors explore transformational learning in situations of violent conflict, whether it is ongoing or has entered a "post conflict" period.<sup>33</sup> Coleman (2003) analyzes the overlap between transformative learning theory and the professional field of conflict resolution, offering "six postulates" for productive sharing of ideas between the two:

1. Conflict is essential to the phenomenon of transformative learning
2. Social conflict presents a unique human opportunity for transformation
3. Optimal tension drives constructive transformation
4. Transformative learning is essential to sustained forms of constructive conflict engagement There is much to learn about transformative learning through the investigation of states of 'no-learning'
5. Conflict transformation within intractable systems requires a complex, multi-level, developmental orientation (p. 106-111).

A number of field-based studies provide more of an empirical basis for the application of transformative learning theory to post-conflict contexts. McCafferey (2005) explores the intersection of literacy; transformative learning; and forgiveness, reconciliation, and reconstruction in three African countries, arguing that the self-expression and creative writing generated in these literacy programs "constitute an important element in post-conflict reconciliation" (p. 443). Smith and Neill (2005) address the transformative potential of narrative modes of learning from appreciative inquiry approaches to peace poems elicited from the young in Northern Ireland. They found:

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<sup>33</sup> The concept of "post-conflict" is itself a problematic one, although outlining it is well beyond the scope of this study. As Fujii suggests (2010) even viewing the United States as a "post-conflict" setting is suspect, given the remaining tensions around the history of violence against African-American and American Indian populations. "Structural violence" (Galtung, 1969) is also a serious problem.

The story-based approach proved to be an empowering and sensitive way to develop a language of possibility for action. Narrative ideas and approaches were found to be extremely powerful tools for challenging that most obdurate of barriers to the transformation of schooling for peace – the “culture of silence” that discourages open discussion within schools on the causes and consequences of social division” (p. 6).

Clark-Habibi (2005) provides an exemplary case study of a primary and secondary school program called “Education for Peace” in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She argues for going beyond current conceptions of peace education to integrate more of an inquiry into the “nature of peace” and how it is established in “human individual and collective life” (2005, p. 33). Specifically, she argues for a focus on “transform[ing] worldviews from a conflict orientation to a peace orientation,” or “actively creating unity” in the place of “reducing conflict” (p. 33). Turay and English (2008) develop a model of transformative peace education by analyzing three peacebuilding programs in Canada, Costa Rica, and Sierra Leone. Using transformative learning theory to develop a model, they propose five key sensibilities to effective programming: “diversity, participatory learning, globalized perspectives, indigenous knowing, and spiritual underpinnings” (p. 286).

Authors promoting the use of transformative learning in the immediate aftermath of violent events include King (2003) and Winthrop (2003). In her study of adult learners in her classroom after September 11, 2001, King (2003) explores how traditional bereavement theory (Kubler-Ross, 1969) and transformational learning theory might work together to help learners “understand and cope with the tragedy and crisis” (p. 23). She concludes that activities and structures to support both the grieving process and the transformational learning process are important, and that educators need to further develop their tools for assisting adult learners in times of crisis (p. 23). Winthrop’s (2003) case study of the role of humanitarian relief (specifically the International Rescue Committee) in the Afghan crisis also argues that responding to contexts of crisis with transformative educational methodology may present distinct opportunities for social change.

Providing somewhat less glowing accounts of the potential of transformative learning in



post-conflict contexts are the works by Magro and Polyzoi (2009) and Salazar (2008). Magro and Polyzoi (2009) use transformative learning theory to interpret the “geographical and psychological terrains” of adult refugees from “war-affected backgrounds” living in Canada. They found that the theory base works well to understand their “deeper level learning” experiences of “trauma, separation, and loss...rebuilding one’s life in an unfamiliar culture; and the process of learning to navigate new cultural, linguistic, and social mores” (p. 85). They conclude that despite the tenacity and courage of most refugees, the transformational learning process for them is recursive, prolonged and “full of challenges” (p. 104). Furthermore, the importance of trust and respect in educational and assistance programs is critical (p. 103). Finally, Salazar (2008) provides us a sobering reminder not to romanticize the efforts of “agents of change” in the face of state terror in Guatemala:

[S]tate terror and violence are not only physical acts of repression and extermination of entire peoples but are also racialized and gendered processes of teaching and learning social paralysis to curtail the will to transform unequal relations of power. These teachings and learnings coexist with progressive citizenship, but this active agency does not mean that agents of change are not deeply hurt. Images of stoicism generalized in analysis of empowerment and individual healing through education are perhaps more damaging than previously thought, for they imply that women and men are free agents in societies that are unequal and unjust, especially those described as ‘in transition to democracy’ as set out by neoliberal designs that promote further de-regulation of capital but more surveillance and control for citizens (p. 215).

The application of transformational learning theory to situations of crisis holds some promise. However, as with Salazar’s (2008) study, it appears the theory base does not adequately explain the range of possibilities and impediments for persons or societies coming to terms with violence.

*Search for meaning in crisis.* In situations of crisis, people are often struggling to make meaning of events they may have absolutely no framework for understanding. These events may be ongoing, and they may be experienced over and over again in dreams, flashbacks, and other episodes (Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). They may find their meaning

perspectives to be woefully inadequate in constructing any way of understanding the events. As discussed previously in the section *Disorienting Dilemma*, people undergoing crisis may experience shock, denial, despair, rage and hatred, depression, and suicidal tendencies, but to potentially debilitating degrees. Indeed, society as a whole may be experiencing “massive loss and vulnerability, [which] can contribute to an extremely pressurized climate under which adults may be struggling to find ways to cope with not only their safety and daily needs, but also their changing understandings of their world – both immediately and distantly” (Parera, Bennett, Matewa, & King, 2003, p. 370). Crises can completely overwhelm even confident and mature people, which in conflict situations causing displacement are compounded by the disorientation of the refugee experience (Magro & Polyzoi, 2009). People searching for meaning in crisis are often struggling with profound grief, which is why King (2003) found grief and bereavement theory (Kubler-Ross, 1969) to be such an important complement to transformational learning theory.

Personal and societal crises often lead to crises of a spiritual nature, driving the questioning of existing cultural and religious values (e.g., Kamis & Muhamed, 2002) and sometimes leading to religious or spiritual conversion (Tedeschi, 1999; Mahoney & Pargament, 2004). As Pargament (1990) observes, when traumatic events arise, some persons use their existing spiritual life to make meaning of these issues. Others might go through a spiritual crisis, where their belief system is weakened and they may become quite cynical (Schwartzberg & Janoff-Bulman, 1991). For still others, crisis may lead to the spiritual quest, whether that is strengthening a religious belief system already in place, or through religious conversion (Mahoney & Pargament, 2004). Such pathways seem to provide an increased sense of control and meaning, which can be a great relief to a person facing trauma and the “shattering of assumptive worlds” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

Very little is understood about why some people emerge from such crises having experienced positive transformations and growth, such as healing and reconciliation (Parera et al,

2003), or even wisdom and a sense of their life's purpose (Tedeschi, 1999).<sup>34</sup> The wisdom literature recognizes a link between loss, adversity, suffering, and despair to wisdom (Allison, 2007), and the psychological literature on post-traumatic growth recognizes the link between extreme violence and personal and social transformation (Tedeschi, 1999), yet how such outcomes are arrived at is poorly understood. Many authors argue that positive outcomes depend on the ability to make meaning of the violent circumstances (e.g., Allison, 2007; Tedeschi, 1999; King, 2003; Parera et al, 2003). Allison's study (2007, p. 8) highlights McAdams & Bowman's work (2001) on the "redemptive sequence," which is "a narrative that is emotionally negative followed by a narrative that is emotionally positive and contains a positive outcome, which redeems and provides meaning for the negative events that precede it." She argues that the redemptive sequence is critical to the process of transformational learning and the outcome of wisdom.

Thus there is good reason to believe that transformative learning theory can be fruitfully applied to understanding transformative experiences of post-genocide reconciliation through processes of meaning making after crisis. As Auschwitz survivor Victor Frankl (1959) argues, almost any kind of suffering can be borne if some meaning can be made of it. But meaning-making after severe crisis is extremely challenging, and perspective transformation may have to occur at a level quite a bit deeper than transformative learning theory typically recognizes. Well-known trauma scholar Janoff-Bulman (1992) writes of the basic assumptions that we all hold; our core beliefs about the self, the external world, and the relationship between the two. These include such beliefs as: the world is basically benevolent, life makes sense (i.e., there is order and meaning), and that the self is worthy and in control.<sup>35</sup> Struggling to make meaning of

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<sup>34</sup> Staub and Pearlman (2001), in their studies on reconciliation in Rwanda, offer their explanation: "People who have been greatly victimized need to find meaning in what seems senseless: their suffering. An aspect of healing is to make meaning of one's experience" (p. 226). Often these people find meaning in helping other people, or what Staub and Pearlman call "altruism born of suffering."

<sup>35</sup> We could add to these a sense that life is fair, that good behavior and intention will be met with good will, and others. Many of these beliefs are derived from very early childhood experiences with caretakers and therefore there is reason to believe Taylor is right when he notes "...transformational learning might inform meaning-making during childhood or adolescence, particularly understanding the impact and the processing of significant trauma.

traumatic events that overturn these basic beliefs – especially if they are random (Janoff-Bulman, 1992) – forces a person to recognize his or her profound vulnerability.<sup>36</sup>

*Process of perspective transformation in crisis.* It is important to note that unless the crisis is sufficiently “in the past,” transformational learning can be expected to be delayed for many people, i.e. timing may be a critical factor. Although the matter of timing is not discussed in the transformational learning literature, it is discussed in the field of post-traumatic growth, where ongoing levels of extreme stress are recognized as an impediment to growth in most people, and persistent victimization is associated with poor outcomes (Tedeschi, 1999).<sup>37</sup> Even after the physical threat has passed, reflection and meaning making may not begin for quite some time. Courtenay et al (1998) acknowledge such a delay in their description of the “initial reaction” to an HIV-positive diagnosis. The initial reaction was in their view crucial to meaning making, and lasted from six months to five years. Because it involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses as the self is managing excessive anxiety, there may be some “psychic numbing” so that the “assumptive world” can be rebuilt gradually (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, as cited in Courtenay et al, 1998). Before any kind of reflection can occur, this period entails “trying to make the old perspectives, assumptions, and ways of coping accommodate the disorienting dilemma” (Courtenay et al, 1998, Importance of Initial Reaction section, para. 7). It is only later, when the individual finds that the old perspective cannot assimilate the new experience, when a “catalytic event” may occur. A catalytic event “signals a readiness to make meaning” (section title). Courtenay et al (1998) describe:

The catalytic event refers to an event, either external or internal, that instigates movement out beyond the initial reaction. The catalytic experience is that which allows one to get

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This would likely [also] be the case for older adults, but whether age is a factor in transformation is not known and needs to be better understood” (Taylor, 2000, p. 289).

<sup>36</sup> Tedeschi (1999 p. 320) describes research indicating that “high-order schemas, such as believing good people have good fortune,” help us to “minimize our sense of vulnerability.”

<sup>37</sup> However, it is unclear what constitutes “in the past,” or what degree of ongoing violence in peripheral areas can be tolerated. This is an important question in Rwanda, where Hutu-Tutsi conflict continues in neighboring DRC; sporadic killings occur within Rwanda; and structural violence continues throughout region.

“unstuck” --to be able to get beyond the dependency on old assumptions for making sense of the dilemma (Catalytic Event Signals section, para. 2)

In Courtenay et al's (1998) study the catalytic event was most likely the beginning of dialogue with others in support groups (Courtenay et al, 1998).

As has been shown by many researchers in transformative learning, support, solidarity, and even empathy have been shown to be important in transformational learning (Taylor, 2007). The importance of support and empathy has been confirmed among studies in crisis contexts (Courtenay et al, 1998; 2000; Magro & Polyzoi, 2009; King, 2003; Staub & Pearlman, 2005; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). In particular, the need to talk through experiences with others has been repeatedly identified: Magro and Polyzoi emphasize the need for significant “self-disclosure and dialogue” (2009, p. 90), while Courtenay et al (1998) find that almost every respondent's catalytic event began with dialogue; they observe that while the need to reflect means the process is still not complete, it also signals that the sense of threat has diminished. As the medium of processing shifts from images to words, the person gains a sense of control of the story and how it is told (Courtenay et al, 1998, also Janoff-Bulman, 1992). King (2003) also found that students identified talking with others and having their feelings validated as crucial to their ability to make meaning of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Yet, as Kilgore and Bloom (2002) argue, the voices of [people] in crisis may not be intelligible from the patriarchal meaning perspective of transformational learning theory, and they may adopt other scripts through which to express their feelings about the crisis. Tedeschi (1999) observes that people may tell stories that are empirically contestable or illusory in quality, but that they serve a role in making the world comprehensible again. Similarly, Janoff-Bulman, (1992) acknowledges that denial and intrusive recollections may serve the process of adaptation, while the person is gradually working to reconstitute their assumptive world.

However, talking through trauma and self-disclosure are particularly valued in Western culture and may not be relevant or productive in some contexts, as shown by Shaw's (2005) work on truth and reconciliation processes in Sierra Leone, or in several authors' work on

reconciliation in Mozambique (e.g., Honwana, 1998; Igreja & Dias-Lambrance, 2008). Even where speaking of trauma is culturally acceptable, the trauma itself may be so stigmatizing that it limits interaction or shapes speech in ways that transformational learning theory is only beginning to account for. In some contexts it may be very dangerous for people to speak openly of their experiences (as with Rwanda), so appreciation for expression through non-discursive processes is important. Also, official or communal denial of trauma (for individuals or groups) may pose serious impediments to transformative learning, although the impact of denial has not been studied.

Finally, the research on recovery after trauma indicates that experiences which help individuals gain a sense of self-efficacy are crucial in helping individuals reconstruct their assumptions (Baumeister, 1991), because of the effect these experiences have on their sense of control. The importance of self-efficacy in recovery is a relevant finding for empowerment programs in conflict contexts. Similarly, the movement from viewing oneself as a “victim” to a “survivor” is an important step in recovery, according to post-traumatic growth scholar Tedeschi (1999).

*Alternative transformations in crisis.* As shown in the foregoing discussion, transformational learning theorists do recognize various kinds of crisis as disorienting dilemmas in the transformative learning process. However, typically transformative learning after crisis is viewed in a positive, even “celebratory” manner (Taylor, 2007). The transformative learning literature inadequately considers the range of perspective transformations that might occur as a person recovers from crisis, including:<sup>38</sup>

1. Negative transformation.
2. Transformation that is not reintegrative, or is adapted but narrowed.
3. Transformation that does not make “meaning” of the crisis.
4. Transformation that moves towards inter-dependence rather than independence.

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<sup>38</sup> In all likelihood, these alternative transformations occur also in non-crisis contexts, but due to the particular crisis at the center of this work (i.e., genocide and mass violence), discussion is directed to such alternatives in crisis.

Taking first the potential for change that is non-transformative, each of the four alternative transformations is discussed briefly here.

The transformational learning literature does consider cases where perspective transformation might not occur, as for example with Merriam's (2004) discussion of cognitive developmental limits to perspective transformation, and most notably with Kilgore and Bloom's (2002) well-founded doubts about perspective transformation among women in "involuntary education" (p. 125), i.e. mandated programs. Kilgore and Bloom (2002) find that transformations may be superficial and short-lived for participants in such programs, due to the ongoing "extreme material, learning, or spiritual poverty" of the participants, as well as the "context of crisis" whereby participants are only present under the duress of an official mandate and/or the educational perception that this is their only hope (Kilgore & Bloom, 2002, p. 125). In a similar, and early, example of questionable transformation, Mezirow's original study (1978a) found that some participants used what he called "self-deception" to impede progress and to rationalize not taking action. And Inglis (1997) argues that there is a critical difference between "emancipation" and "empowerment," whereby only the former is transformative. The latter does not truly liberate, but only prepares learners to be more fit in the struggle for success within the context. All of these examples should be viewed as lacking the crucial element of perspective transformation, and therefore they should be considered as "non-transformation."

"Negative transformations," which *would* entail perspective transformation but not in the positive direction that Mezirow (2003a) and others assume, has very little consideration in the literature. Taylor (2007) notes that negative consequences are overlooked, and Courtenay et al (2000) observe that negative changes in meaning schemes warrant further investigation. Brookfield (1994) does call attention to the negative effects of perspective transformation among adult educators, although not in a crisis context. Key studies of negative transformations in crisis include the previously mentioned analysis of state terror in Guatemala by Salazar (2008), and Naughton and Schied's (2010) study on the negative effects of perspective transformation in pre-

genocide Rwanda. In fact, as Naughton and Schied observe, when moving outside adult education literature, positive directionality in transformation is not assumed. In their conclusion, Naughton and Schied (2010, p. 342) make a critical point: “In valorizing primarily transformative experiences which result in positive directionality, educators, therapists, and other interventionists miss or undermine a full range of human experiences that have altered lives and history.”

“Transformation this is not reintegrative, or is adaptive but narrowed” is also not well considered in the literature, although there are a few very compelling studies. For example, McDonald (1999) explores transformational learning among ethical vegans, yet finds that due to interpersonal and socio-cultural communicative distortions, perspective transformation was experienced as disempowering, silencing, and eventually discouraging of social integration or action. Kiely (2002) describes the difficulty of reintegration to American society after perspective transformation in Nicaragua as the “chameleon complex,” while Duveskog and Friis-Hansen (2009) find that *promoting* transformative learning in Field Farmer Schools in Kenya can actually lead to cynicism, apathy, and helplessness in a context where authorities hinder change and action by the poor. However, rather than only being limited by their context, it is also possible that persons can reach perspectives that are “beyond” their context, as with Kegan’s (1994) work on orders of consciousness.<sup>39</sup> Such disconnection between perspective transformation in individuals and their context return us to key critiques of Mezirow’s theory (Clark & Wilson, 1991).

“Transformations that do not make meaning of the crisis” appear to have no coverage in the literature, perhaps due to the underlying assumption of transformative learning theory (discussed earlier) that meaning making is *fundamental* to human existence. Indeed, it is hard to imagine what this sort of transformation might look like. However, situations of extreme crisis

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<sup>39</sup> Kegan (1994) describes transformations in levels of consciousness among people who get “out ahead of their culture” (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jesus Christ, Gandhi) which can be dangerous. Kegan is referring to those who reach the fifth order of consciousness, but the risk of being out ahead of one’s culture may also apply to fourth order consciousness when the setting does not support the consciousness that comes with that order.



and social rupture raise the possibility of learning that progresses from a pre-crisis meaning perspective to a post-crisis meaning perspective that essentially concludes that meaning either does not exist, or cannot be found, made, or grasped by the human mind. This possibility would *be* a meaning perspective (a held set of meaning schemes, habits of mind, and so on), but it would not imbue a person's life with a *sense of meaning*. Due to the nature of the crisis in this study (genocide and mass violence), this kind of transformation is explored later in this study.

Finally, "transformation that moves toward inter-dependence rather than independence" is suggested in the literature, as with the studies on transformation and spirituality (Tisdell, 2000; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2002; Daloz et al, 1996; Kovan and Dirkx, 2003). Typically such transformations are described as giving one a sense of higher purpose, connection to the sacred, or profound humility. The connection between such outcomes and *inter*-dependence (as opposed to independence, autonomy, and self-direction) -- with a higher power, with other people, or with the cosmos -- is not usually highlighted. The potential for transformation that leads to increasing interdependence, especially as it pertains to transformative experiences in reconciliation, is explored later in this work.

### Post-conflict Reconciliation Theory

Quite unlike the theory of transformative learning, the theory base in post-conflict reconciliation is not well formed. Promotion of truth, healing, and reconciliation after violent conflict is a recent phenomenon (Helmick & Petersen, 2001). As Minow (1998, p. 63) notes: "Nobody talked about healing after the holocaust." Yet, the word reconciliation is used as if there were some commonly accepted meaning of the word (Eisikovits, 2010). Because the authors and practitioners come from "widely varied backgrounds.....they by no means present uniform perspectives," (Quinn, 2009a, p. 5-6) and definitions of reconciliation range so widely as to be mutually exclusive or incompatible with each other, especially when contrasted to "forgiveness." Even dictionary-based definitions of reconciliation include meanings that are qualitatively different from each other, yet quite enlightening when viewing the range of

responses to violent conflict (e.g. reconciliation as resigning oneself to one's fate, vs. reconciliation as restoring to amicable relation).<sup>40</sup> A survey of the scholarship and practice of "reconciliation" is beyond the scope of this review. However, a very basic definition of reconciliation from one prominent reconciliation scholar provides a stepping off point into several issues of importance to this study: Hayner (2002, p. 161) defines reconciliation as "building or rebuilding relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatreds of yesterday." Quinn (2009a) adds that most in the field "agree that it is about building relationships of trust and cohesion" (p. 5).<sup>41</sup> This basic definition can operate at the level of interpersonal or international conflict, and indeed this is a key issue in the literature base.

Scholars from multiple fields approach forgiveness and reconciliation (which are often entwined in the literature) at different levels of sociopolitical organization. While some might hold fast to arguments that a particular level deserves more attention, well-known edited volumes on the topic (e.g. Quinn, 2009a; Helmick & Petersen, 2001) demonstrate that reconciliation operates on both personal and political levels and that multiple mechanisms may need to be used at once (Quinn, 2009a, p. 4). As Quinn (2009a) observes, reconciliation, "deals with collective but, at the same time, remains located within the individual, whose commitment to, and action regarding, reconciliation ultimately informs the corporate process. It is possible for a person to carry out reconciliation at the personal level and, in so doing, to contribute to political reconciliation" (p. 5).<sup>42</sup> Importantly, Quinn (2009a, p. 6) also notes that the voices of persons

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<sup>40</sup> The seven definitions of "reconciliation" provided by the Second Edition of the Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1987) are: (1) "to cause a person to accept or be resigned to something not desired" (as to his fate); (2) "to win over to friendliness; cause to become amicable" (as to reconcile hostile persons); (3) "to compose or settle (a quarrel, dispute, etc.)"; (4) "to bring into agreement or harmony; make compatible of consistent" (as with accounts); (5) "to reconsecrate" (as with a church or cemetery); (6) "to restore (an excommunicant or penitent to communion in a church)"; and (7) "to become reconciled...make good again; repair." Much more recent definitions, such as Encyclopedia Britannica online (<http://www.britannica.com/bps/dictionary?query=reconcile>) have tended to drop meanings (5) and (6), and to merge others.

<sup>41</sup> See Crocker (1999) for his range of "thin" to "thick" reconciliation, which range from enemies simply agreeing not to kill each other on one end to the parties being able to address a shared future without violence on the other end. See Hamber and Kelly (2004; 2009) for discussions of a "working definition" of reconciliation "beyond coexistence."

<sup>42</sup> Worthington (2006) argues that because of all the different ways people approach forgiveness and reconciliation (which he frames in terms of "reducing unforgiveness"), societies should use multiple types of interventions to

undergoing reconciliation are rarely heard in the discussion, a critique this particular study means to partially rectify by focusing on the individuals within the small organizations at the center of this study.<sup>43</sup>

The importance of viewing reconciliation as a *transformation* of relationships at multiple levels of the society is another key issue in the reconciliation literature, although the term “transformation” appears to never be developed in this literature. For example, Lederach (1997) argues that reconciliation has to go beyond the laying down of arms and into addressing the root causes of the violence, not only at the national level but throughout all levels of the society. “Authentic reconciliation,” Lederach writes (2001), is relationship centric. It isn’t about “external positions and issues,” but about “inner understandings, fears and hopes, perceptions, and interpretations of the relationship itself” (p. 195). “The defining quality of practice is the building of trust” (Lederach, 2001, p. 195).<sup>44</sup>

Using Piaget’s social cognitive developmental model, Hicks (2001) also stresses the importance of inner understandings, fears, and perceptions in reconciliation. Her argument is that “traumatic threat[s]” in conflict are not only threats to our identity, but to our beliefs about ourselves; how we arrive at those beliefs [i.e. epistemology]; and how those beliefs help us to function in the world. Thus it is not only our identity that is threatened in conflict, but our integrity as “the sum total of the understanding of the self and the world” (p. 141). Therefore, in reconciliation processes, what are being negotiated are the conditions under which persons will accept new information about the other and the self without threat to their integrity (Hicks,

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promote reconciliation.

<sup>43</sup> A prominent scholar focusing specifically on the “middle levels” of reconciliation is Lederach (1997; 2001). For coverage of national level processes of reconciliation, see Hayner (2002); Du Toit (2009); Couper (1998); Shriver (1998); and other authors in Quinn (2009) and Helmick and Peterson (2001). Harakas (2001) writes about the tension between relational and legal approaches to reconciliation.

<sup>44</sup> According to Lederach (2001), “Social technologies” cannot bring about reconciliation, but the following qualities of practice are important: centrality of relationships; challenge of accompaniment; space for reconciliation created by humility; community as the place for reconciliation; and the “recognition that time and even barrenness – not unlike wandering in the desert – are places to which one may have to go before reconciliation can be achieved.” (Helmick & Petersen, 2001, p. xxii). The last is a biblical metaphor for the length and complexity of the process of reconciliation.

2001). The “cognitive epistemological exercise” is important, but so is the “felt experience” of the trauma (Hicks, 2001, p. 144-146).

Not surprisingly, empathy and/or sympathy are commonly recognized elements in reconciliation processes, even at the national or political levels (e.g. Eisikovits, 2010). In their study of empathy and rehumanization in Bosnia, Halpern and Weinstein (2004, p. 562) argue that empathy is a “critical component of reconciliation” as it is brought to bear in the process of rehumanizing the other party. Empathy “particularizes and individualizes” the enemy, “challenging the major aspects of dehumanization” (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004, p. 568). It requires “emotional and cognitive openness,” and a curiosity to learn about the other (p. 569). However, Halpern and Weinstein did not find a single case of such empathy in their study (2004). Staub and Pearlman (2001) do note instances of empathy in their analysis of healing and reconciliation workshops in Rwanda, but caution that reconciliation won’t be lasting if both sides (Tutsi in this case) do not acknowledge their wrongs (p. 225). This caution is well-taken. As Hicks (2001, p. 149) also argues, “The restoration of humanity requires an identity shift on both sides of the divide.” Importantly, Hicks (2001, p. 148) observes the lack of attention paid to what perpetrators need in “coming to terms with the aspect of their identities that allows them to commit acts of violence upon the other.” Unfortunately, as Minow (1998) notes, so often in post-conflict settings, one individual may be a victim, a perpetrator, and a bystander to the violence.<sup>45</sup>

A growing subset of the literature in reconciliation is recognizing the importance of using traditional methods of reconciliation, rather than top-down national or international processes (e.g., Shaw, 2005; Quinn, 2009b). There is also growing respect for the roles of religious and civil society actors in reconciliation processes, such as Botchorova’s (2001) emphasis on “deep diplomacy.” Although religion has been used for both constructive and destructive purposes in

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<sup>45</sup> Minow’s (1998, p. 8) conception of a “personal transformation” in reconciliation is moving away from a thirst for revenge; or from anger to the knowledge that one is “not like them.” This study views Minow’s conception as dehumanizing, and therefore as potentially transformative but non-integrative.

conflict (Volf, 2001), in many contexts religious organizations found other important civil society organizations. These organizations often play critical roles in the “emerging civil order” (Helmick & Petersen, 2001, p. xxvi).<sup>46</sup> Helmick and Petersen (2001), along with Lederach (1997) and others, argue for the importance of such middle level players in peace processes. They write, “The community at large is the embracing association within which other associations live, the state being one of these. The state in this perspective is the creature and servant of the community, not its creator” (Helmick & Petersen, 2001, p. xxvi).

### Towards a Theory of Transformative Reconciliation

As the first major section of this chapter demonstrated, the adult learning theory of perspective transformation -- as first conceptualized by Mezirow and built upon by many authors since -- holds promise in understanding transformational learning after violent conflict. Because the theory is well developed, it provides conceptual clarification of the meaning of “transformation.” The theoretical base also identifies important parts of the process (i.e., reflection, meaning-making, discourse, action, and so on); and provides evidence for certain characteristics of perspective transformation (i.e., expanded sense of mission in life; greater confidence and self-efficacy, deepened spirituality; and so on). Although it has many areas of weakness (e.g. its overreliance on cognitive processes), these weaknesses can be addressed by broadening the theory (i.e., applying it to new contexts) and deepening it (i.e., integrating more hidden, troublesome, or poorly understood aspects of human experience).

The theory of post-conflict reconciliation is, in contrast, quite a bit less developed and much in need of conceptual clarification. The level at which reconciliation works (i.e. international or intrapersonal, or the intersection between the two) is not well established, although this study focuses on the personal experiences of reconciliation within small non-governmental organizations. Throughout the reconciliation literature, the term “transformative”

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<sup>46</sup> This may be especially so in contexts where violence has involved “desecration” of some form. As Mahoney, Rye, and Pargament (2005, p. 71) argue, reconciliation after desecration is not only a matter of reconciling victim and perpetrator, but also of exploring the damage to one’s relationship to the sacred.

is often used to indicate profound change, but without conceptual development. It is to this definitional task in particular that the transformative learning literature is applied in this study. By utilizing the transformative learning literature to develop the concept of “transformative reconciliation,” this research intends to distinguish between various kinds of reconciliation and to highlight one kind (i.e., transformative) that is particularly important in post-conflict reconciliation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS

The overarching purpose of this study is to understand more about the learning that takes place within a set of locally generated organizations that are attempting to promote reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda. More specifically, the research questions guiding this study are: (1) how and why these organizations formed; (2) what learning occurs in these organizations, whether intended or unintended; (3) how this learning supports personal or social recovery and/or reconciliation; (4) how transformative learning theory assists in understanding this learning, and (5) how this learning assists in developing transformative learning theory. A qualitative case study design was chosen for this study. This chapter first describes the rationale for a qualitative case study design, highlighting the features that make this approach particularly well suited to this study, and specifying the type of case study design pursued. Then a roughly chronological sequence of research steps is described in detail, including: case selection; gaining and maintaining field access; multiple methods of data collection and sampling; management of data in field; and analysis of data. Strategies to assure the trustworthiness of the study are discussed next, followed by a related discussion of the limitations of the study. Because this study was quite complex in its evolution, several tables with condensed information are provided. A chronology of research activity is provided at the end of the chapter in Table 4.3.

### Rationale for Qualitative Case Study Design

A qualitative case study design was selected for this study because it excels when the focus of the study is how and why questions, when the behavior of those involved in the study cannot be manipulated, and when the context is either very relevant to the phenomenon under study or because the boundaries between the phenomenon and the

context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2003).<sup>1</sup> The context is in fact integral to this study, and the case study method allows me to treat it as an interrelated array of interesting variables (Yin, 2003). Case studies are empirical investigations of phenomena within their natural context, using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). They allow “intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time [in order] to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved” (Hancock & Algozine, 2006, p. 9). Because case studies seek in-depth understanding of particular cases, their aim is not to form generalizations supported by random sampling methods.<sup>2</sup> Rather, case studies use information-oriented sampling with the aim of generating and testing hypotheses and/or propositions (Flyvbjerg, 2006), or to understand a particular case very well for its intrinsic value (Stake, 2005). Cases do not have to be typical, or similar to each other; they are chosen because understanding them may lead to better theorizing about a larger collection of cases (Stake, 2005).

The type of case study warranted depends on the purpose of the research project. Two key theorists for the case study method (Stake and Yin) provide different typologies for case studies. For Stake (1995), there are *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective* case studies. For Yin (2008) there are *explanatory*, *exploratory*, or *descriptive* types of case study, which can be studied as *single (holistic)* cases, or as *multiple-case* studies. There is overlap between the types within and across the two typologies. Utilizing Stake’s (1995) typology, this particular study is an instrumental case study because it seeks to

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<sup>1</sup> Case studies are not necessarily qualitative, and in fact often use both qualitative and quantitative data (Yin, 2003). This study utilizes a qualitative approach because it is based on the interpretive-constructivist paradigm, which assumes that there is no one social reality (reducible and measurable) but instead multiple social realities. Knowledge is everywhere, and is socially constructed; therefore, all sorts of information can validly be called “knowledge,” and specific accounts inform each other (Thomas, 2009, p. 73). Qualitative research does not seek to establish concrete answers as much as to refine the discussion by making available the answers that others, “guarding sheep in other valleys,” have given to those questions, thus “enlarge[ing] the universe of human discourse.” (Geertz, as cited in Agar, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Random sampling is not only nearly impossible when studying a larger phenomenon, but it can reduce social phenomena to “uninterpretable sawdust” because these phenomena have their own logic and coherence (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27).



provide insight into an issue or phenomenon, rather than to simply understand the case by itself (known as an intrinsic study).<sup>3</sup> Instrumental cases play a secondary role in facilitating our understanding of something else (Stake, 2000). In this study, multiple organizations are considered in the effort to understand more about the phenomenon of reconciliation, making it a collective case study, where analysis within and across cases is possible (Stake, 2005). The organizations are one unit of analysis in this study, while the other unit is the individual “nested” within the organization, undergoing (or not) the phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 2002).<sup>4</sup> Thus, this is a multi-level case study, where the phenomenon within the individual is studied within the organization.<sup>5</sup>

Many case studies utilize propositions to help bind the cases, guide case selection, and to narrow data collection and analysis. Propositions may come from the literature, from the researcher’s own experiences, or from empirical data, and taken together they form the foundation for the conceptual framework of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995). As reconciliation in Rwanda is very under-theorized and researched, the propositions of this study shifted as the focus of the study shifted (described below).

### Case Selection

The greatest understanding of the critical phenomenon in a case study is dependent on choosing the case(s) well (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling strategies are used to build in variety and to optimize the opportunity for intensive study (Stake, 2005).

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<sup>3</sup> Cases can be individuals, but are most often phenomena, such as events, situations, programs, or processes (Hatch, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> “Binding” a case can be a challenging aspect of the case study method, as a loose definition of case can easily explode into an overwhelming amount of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). There are several ways of binding cases, but Merriam (1998) simply suggests that a case is bounded if the number of participants who can be interviewed or observed within that case is finite.

<sup>5</sup> Individuals may undergo reconciliation and the organizations may support them or impede them in that process. Whether the organizations themselves undergo transformation (and how) is beyond the scope of this study.

Being purposive may sometimes mean choosing a case based on its accessibility or availability for extended periods of time. As Stake (2005, p. 451) writes, “Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. Sometimes it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case.” As the need to select cases that maximized learning opened up new considerations throughout the case selection process, this section first describes the initial investigation of potential cases, then explains the reasons for expanding the study in 2008, and closes with a summary of the final four cases selected.

The case selection process began in early 2006, during my ongoing consultancies with one large international development agency in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a small international non-governmental organization (INGO) working in partnership with an emerging non-governmental organization (NGO) in Rwanda. Knowing that I would return to Rwanda in mid-2007 for the pilot phase of fieldwork, I gathered information during my 2006 consultancy appointments on a number of reconciliation programs in Rwanda and made numerous initial contacts. These included large international NGO-sponsored organizations down to small *umudugudu*-level associations recommended by colleagues.<sup>6</sup> In some cases (e.g., Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation, described at length in Chapter Five), I spent considerable time with the organization without having decided whether or not to include it in the study. At the time, I had not yet joined transformative learning theory and reconciliation theory, so the number of potential cases was large and clear criteria for narrowing them down to a manageable size was lacking. As I prepared for the pilot phase of the fieldwork, I began to narrow the options down by making distinctions that were important to the study. Without deliberately planning to do so, I employed a number of sampling strategies from

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<sup>6</sup> *Umudugudu* are village-sized settlements constructed in the years after the 1994 genocide. Associations at the *umudugudu* level were often quite difficult to make contact with during my consultancies, which reduced their viability for this study.

Patton's (2002, p. 230-241) 16 types of purposive sampling, emphasizing the importance of selecting "information-rich" cases from which a great deal can be learned about the phenomena in question (p. 181). The types of purposive sampling employed changed over time, and they help to frame the following discussion about case selection.

In the earliest phase of case selection (2006-2007), as I drew on recommendations from a network of Rwandan friends and colleagues (in the US and Rwanda), I was increasingly drawn to programs serving women because of their considerable suffering during and after the genocide, and the abundance of programs serving them. Despite their suffering, women are very much on the rise in Rwanda, occupying a majority (now 56%) of the seats in the Rwandan Parliament.<sup>7</sup> This remarkable change in women's political representation suggested intriguing changes in gender identity and social agency in the aftermath of genocide. Furthermore, the fact that many women's organizations claimed to be promoting reconciliation made them attractive possibilities for this study. Using the "snowball" or "chain" method of purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), I contacted a number of recommended organizations and arranged for visits once I arrived in Rwanda.<sup>8</sup> As the pilot phase began and I visited these programs, I learned of even more programs and followed many leads to them, thus utilizing Patton's "opportunistic" sampling strategy. Some of these, while arrived at opportunistically, would otherwise be "typical cases" by Patton's typology because they highlighted what I eventually came to see as "normal" or "average" for reconciliation groups in Rwanda. Others, most notably the religious programs I was attending on the periphery of my research project, could be classified as "extreme or deviant" cases in Patton's typology, because they offered what I came to see as "highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest" (Patton,

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<sup>7</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2008). Elections were held while I was in Rwanda.

<sup>8</sup> There are too many reconciliation programs in Rwanda for even the government to keep account of (data from interviews with Antoine Rutayisire [NURC Commissioner] and Fatuma Ndagiza [Director of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, NURC] in July 2008 and January 2009, respectively). I also sought recommendations on effective reconciliation programs by asking colleagues, psychologists, NGO leaders, ministerial leaders, key informants, and church leaders.

1990). The pilot phase drew abruptly to a close due to a family tragedy back in the US, but not before one of these “extreme” cases provided me with a very personal experience of reconciliation within a Christian program, which was later to become a focus of the study.

An extended period back in the U.S. provided opportunity for more theoretical preparation as well as a more thoughtful view on case selection. Importantly, linking transformative learning theory and reconciliation theory yielded theoretical justification for investigating one of the early propositions of this study: that if people are able and willing to perceive the experiences of the “other,” they are more likely to undergo a kind of reconciliation that is transformative.<sup>9</sup> Another proposition I held loosely for the study was that “attending to the past” (through empathetic engagement with the other), as well as “attending to the future” (through socioeconomic empowerment and opportunity), are both important in transformative reconciliation. These propositions had some suggestive support in the literatures on reconciliation and transformative learning, but have been inadequately conceptualized (as outlined in Chapter Three). Taken together, they shaped my interest in Rwandan organizations that appeared to utilize critical dialogue, empowerment, and/or empathy (all constructs developed in transformative learning theory); and especially *mutual* empathy (a feminist contribution to adult learning theory). I was at this time familiar with only one program that actively utilized critical discourse, and it was dominated by men,<sup>10</sup> so I focused the study on organizations that utilized approaches of empathy and empowerment in reconciliation, for which the number of cases in Rwanda abounds.<sup>11</sup> Because of my developing proposition that empathy and

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<sup>9</sup> The “other” in this context often refers to Hutu or Tutsi, but also refers to people from different Christian congregations; those present/absent during the genocide; northern/southern Hutu, survivors/perpetrators, and others.

<sup>10</sup> Critical discourse programs are very rare in Rwanda, as public discussion of ethnicity has been illegalized (see Chapter Two). One exception to this rule is the *Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix*. Another is the Parliament des Jeunes Rwandais (PAJER). As these were male-dominated organizations, I did not investigate them in more depth.

<sup>11</sup> Approach utilized was initially ascertained from program name, description, mission, and activities; or

empowerment were conjoined in intriguing ways within processes of reconciliation, this guided my selection of programs. Thus the sampling that corresponded to this period was “theory-based” or “operational construct” based sampling (Patton, 1990, p. 182-183).

It had also become increasingly clear during the pilot study that I needed to find programs operating independently of the government, because the government’s constraints on discussions of identity, ethnicity and historical events (if different from the official view) were likely suppressing free expression of these topics within programs dependent on the government.<sup>12</sup> Through this process of seeking independent organizations, I realized another of the study’s propositions: that transformative reconciliation can and does actually occur in the context of political repression, but that the critical reflection and social action that occur will be adapted to the context. In other words, transformative learning and transformative reconciliation *might* occur by other-than-rational pathways. The flourishing of women’s associations after the genocide seemed to provide contexts within which transformative learning (and perhaps reconciliation) might be occurring, but many of these organizations have been recognized as perpetuating ethnic divisions (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000). The government does not appear to be explicitly keeping these associations ethnically homogenous, but much of its support goes to survivor groups (e.g., IBUKA, AVEGA) or umbrella groups like *Twese Hamwe*, which under-serve Hutu women, and can serve very political agendas (Newbury & Baldwin, 2000; Burnet, 2005). There had been some suggestions in the literature on Rwanda that small women’s associations that formed *outside* of government control might be creating, intentionally or not, opportunities for women of opposite experience categories to share their experiences, thus touching on matters of identity, ethnicity, and

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as recommended to me or as described in other authors’ work (e.g. Burnet [2005]; Newbury & Baldwin [2000; 2001]; Ranck [1998; 2000]).

<sup>12</sup> Transformational learning theory and reconciliation theory assert the importance of critical discourse and dialogue, respectively.

history (Burnet, 2005).<sup>13</sup> I was curious if this kind of association would be more able to encourage open dialogue (and/or mutual empathy) than those that were dependent on the government or overly linked to its leadership, and I therefore tried to select women's associations that were multi-ethnic *and* relatively independent of the government.

With these guidelines in mind, I returned to Rwanda in mid-2008 for eight months of fieldwork, prepared to visit a variety of programs for initial inquiry. I held to the following criteria in selecting programs to visit, although often I did not know enough to eliminate a program until I visited it:

1. Primary focus on serving the needs of women.
2. Emphasis on promoting reconciliation, whether by empowerment or empathy pathways.<sup>14</sup>
3. Multi-ethnic.<sup>15</sup>
4. Independent of the government.<sup>16</sup>
5. Founded and led by Rwandese.<sup>17</sup>
6. Serves at least 50 members, and has staff/leadership of at least two (paid or unpaid).
7. Founded in the post-genocide period, but no later than 2000.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Some women have joined very small associations with relatively little government involvement because they feel participation in government sponsored programs constrains their ability to communicate their own experiences and needs (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009). This includes Tutsi survivors who choose not to join the many survivor groups supported by the government because they feel their suffering is being manipulated for political ends (Burnet, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Empathy and empowerment (“attending to the past,” and “attending to the future,” respectively) were still somewhat loosely defined constructs, but generally an empathetic pathway required at the minimum perspective-taking activities, whether that be through dialogue or much deeper emotional listening to the experiences of persons from the other ethnic group. Empowerment required at the minimum activities designed to increase personal, economic, or political power among participants.

<sup>15</sup> Claims of multi-ethnicity were usually made to me by the person recommending the association, and then confirmed with association leadership.

<sup>16</sup> All organizations have some relationship with the government, but funding dependency, or seemingly excessive informal association with local, regional, or national government was cause for elimination from study (e.g., IBUKA was eliminated because it is viewed as “extremist” by some non-survivors [Rombouts, 2004]). In reality, it is difficult to know the level of dependency or what “excessive association” is, and few cases are as clear cut as IBUKA.

<sup>17</sup> This does not exclude funding or collaboration from outside entities, but does exclude in-country leadership by non-Rwandese. I did not have to wrestle with how much outside funding was still acceptable, as every organization either fell into the “too much” category (e.g. Women for Women International) or the “not too much” category, i.e. so little outside funding they could be considered to be acting independently of foreign funders.

8. No more than four hours drive from capital of Kigali, to allow multiple extended visits.
9. Amenability to having a foreign researcher visiting with the program for extended periods, asking questions, requesting documents, and interviewing participants.

Due to the large number of women's associations in Rwanda in the post-genocide period, these criteria were intended to establish some degree of similarity between programs so that their size, longevity, proximity, and origin of leadership did not unnecessarily complicate the findings of the study. Variation was purposefully sought on the dimension of rural/urban location, so that if processes of reconciliation are affected by factors associated with the level of rurality (such as educational level or access to jobs), the data might reflect the importance of those factors.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the initial study design in mid-2008 was to investigate a number of women's organizations and then to choose two or three that best fit the phenomenon I was seeking to understand: at least one employing the empowerment pathway to reconciliation, and at least one employing the empathy pathway. However, as I visited a growing number of associations, two patterns started to emerge. The first was that while empathy and empowerment were still very compelling conceptually, most organizations did some of both. While I found numerous organizations that did primarily empowerment work, I didn't find any organization that was doing primarily empathy work (whether mutual or not) without at least some effort in the area of empowerment.<sup>20</sup> The second pattern was that some associations claimed "multi-ethnicity," but were multi-ethnic in ways that did not truly meet the aims of the study. The most common examples of this pattern were

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<sup>18</sup> One of the four organizations that was finally included in the study (African Evangelistic Enterprise) did start before the genocide, but this fact made AEE particularly interesting in the final analysis.

<sup>19</sup> Geographic location may in fact have much to do with reconciliation processes. For example, in the northwest of the country, where a Hutu insurgency lasted until 1999, efforts at reconciliation are quite a bit more complicated by the ongoing tension in the region (data from interview with human rights lawyer in Kigali, Rwanda in August, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> For example, many psycho-social recovery organizations exist, but they either have other areas of work in empowerment or their trauma services were inaccessible to me.

widows' associations that did not include Hutu widows of any kind.<sup>21</sup> Also common were organizations that did not have members from the diaspora (i.e. returnees from Congo, Uganda, Tanzania), which is today a significant source of division. Thus, as fieldwork continued, I started to see some patterns in what were "typical" programs, and there were quite a number of them. There can be no doubt their work is incredibly critical to the recovery of many women in Rwanda today, and that they do in fact promote some kind of reconciliation. Yet, many of them only appeared to be facilitating engagement between *subsections* of each ethnicity, rather than the more opposite experience categories.<sup>22</sup> For this study to reach a greater understanding of transformative reconciliation, it needed to be investigating cases where the *other* "other" was being engaged. I came to refer to cases that engaged the other "other" as "exemplary."<sup>23</sup>

### *Expansion of Study*

After the early round of investigations into potential cases, it occurred to me that I had been witnessing exemplary cases in the many religious services I had attended on the periphery of my research project. First, I had stayed for extended periods at the guesthouse of the African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE), which is an Africa-wide organization offering a diversity of services and trainings to multiple sectors of Rwandan

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<sup>21</sup> Hutu widows of Hutu husbands killed by the RPF (or of Hutu husbands killed while defending Tutsi) were particularly interesting to me, but were not found in these organizations. In particular, RPF atrocities against Hutu are denied and minimized (as described in Chapter Two), so Hutu widows of murdered Hutu men are not seen as "widows of the genocide," and therefore do not belong to these associations. Associations serving only Hutu widows do not exist at all, as they would certainly be accused of "genocide ideology" by the government (data from interview with former investigator for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Kigali, Rwanda in July of 2007).

<sup>22</sup> "Experience categories" were discussed in Chapter Two. The government of Rwanda refers to "survivors" (Tutsi), "old caseload returnees" (largely Tutsi), "new caseload returnees" (Hutu), and "genocide suspects" (Hutu). However, other categories exist, such as Hutu survivors of genocide and flight to Congo, and Tutsi perpetrators. And the distinction between those present and those absent during the genocide is critical. Multiple Tutsi remarked to me that they feel "closer" to Hutu who were present during the genocide than they do to Tutsi returnees. For their part, many Tutsi returnees told me all their closest associates are fellow returnees (data from interviews and fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>23</sup> I called such cases "exemplary" because Patton's typology (1990; 2002) would refer to them as "extreme," or "deviant" cases (both terms that seemed a bit sharp for usage in this study).



society (widows, street children, orphans, AIDS afflicted, prostitutes, and *gacaca* judges, among others). One of AEE's programs is offering healing and reconciliation retreats for various populations. I had attended parts of these retreats at the behest of close friends at AEE who knew I was researching Rwandan reconciliation. And through these retreats I had met many other persons doing reconciliation work through religious programs in Rwanda.<sup>24</sup> I had also befriended the leader of the Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR) in Rwanda, and had attended parts of his organization's healing and reconciliation retreats, as well as a number of his church's services. And through another avenue altogether, I had made the acquaintance of the two women running the organization Umusamaritani W'umtumve ("Good Samaritans"), who had also invited me to their healing and reconciliation retreats.<sup>25</sup> These were all sites where sometimes dramatic empathetic engagements with self and the "other" seemed to be occurring. Furthermore, as I considered the messages conveyed there, I came to see such ideas as "you are an ambassador of God," and "God saved you for a reason" as perhaps indicating a different kind of empowerment. Although I had not gone to Rwanda to study the churches' role in transformative reconciliation, I had inadvertently been exposed to a dimension of Rwandan reconciliation that I could no longer keep at the margins of my study.<sup>26</sup> I

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<sup>24</sup> For example, I came into contact with leaders of Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA), LeRucher, Rwanda Partners, and others.

<sup>25</sup> I received numerous requests from friends and associates to be their guest at Sunday services in a wide variety of evangelical churches. I was overwhelmed by these demands on my time and energy, as the services often consumed most of a Sunday, and the volume of the loudspeakers, heat of the venue, length of service, pressure to give testimony, and sometimes the content of the preaching was quite challenging for me. Thus, I was initially reluctant to include such programs in my study.

<sup>26</sup> In fact, I came to wonder how so many researchers study reconciliation in Rwanda without any mention of the churches, or only make very outdated mention of the church's role in the Rwandan genocide. All over Kigali, in buildings both modern and ramshackle, whether under leaky aluminum corrugated roofs or brand new *toiles*, church bands crank out big sound with their electric guitars, full drum sets, and large amplifiers. Choirs of all ages and groups dance and sing on the stages for hours on end. Pastors young and old yell out their calls to congregants and passers-by. Congregants dance, sing, and cry out their prayers all at once in cacophonies of sound during the services, which last from three to six hours. These churches dominate the sound waves in many parts of Kigali on a Sunday, many of them also during the mid-day break on weekdays. In contrast, churches serving foreigners (one of them next door to my last residence) attract their members with claims of "services that are only an hour and a half" (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

therefore expanded the study to include religious reconciliation programs; and because every religious program I knew was of mixed gender, I ultimately included men in the study.

The decision to include religious programs drove the development of two more propositions guiding this study: Empowerment can be spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, or political; and empowerment may not be a gain in control or autonomy (as expected in transformative learning theory) but rather a *surrender* of control (to God). It also rounded out one more proposition, which I had tacitly held from the beginning: Transformative reconciliation (as with transformative learning) involves body, mind, spirit, and affect to varying degrees, based on internal and external factors. Major and minor propositions for this study, along with assumptions that are well-established in the literature, are all schematically presented in Table 7.2 in Chapter Seven, where they are used to guide data analysis.

### *Final Case Selection*

By the completion of the fieldwork phase of the study in February of 2009, I had reviewed more than 30 associations, and conducted exploratory visits with 17 of them, 10 of them based in Kigali and seven in rural areas or small towns.<sup>27</sup> These 17 associations employed a wide variety of approaches, from economic empowerment to trauma counseling to religious reconciliation. Wanting to both compare similar cases to each other and compare dissimilar programs to each other, I narrowed my cases down to six.<sup>28</sup> I eliminated cases for a variety of reasons, whether because they did not actually serve a diverse population, or because the leaders seemed too busy to welcome a researcher, or

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<sup>27</sup> These numbers are complicated by the fact that some associations (such as Good Samaritans) are based in Kigali but have regional centers in other parts of the country, or others (such as PCR) that are based in Kigali but conduct *retreats* all over the country, or are based in a rural area (such as Duhozanye) but cover a region which includes major towns and vast rural areas.

<sup>28</sup> Yin (2003) refers to the comparison of cases that might generate similar results as “literal replication,” and those that might generate contrasting results for predictable reasons based on theory as “theoretical replication.”

because the senior leadership was non-Rwandan. Among the remaining six organizations, two of them (Mbwira Ndumva and Duhozanye) were “typical” in that they promote reconciliation among genocide widows, survivors, and orphans and those infected with HIV-AIDS. One of the six promotes reconciliation through economic empowerment of women all over the country (Gahaya Links).<sup>29</sup> And three promote it through religious healing and reconciliation (Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation [PCR], Umusamaritani W’umdumve, and African Evangelistic Enterprise [AEE]).<sup>30</sup>

Although I interviewed the leaders and at least seven people at every one of the six final organizations, both the enormity of the project and the theoretical overlap of cases caused me to narrow my formal analysis to four programs. Umusamaritani W’umdumve (“Good Samaritans”) was eliminated because my attendance at retreats had clearly led to a staging of events, the program’s leader assertively determined access to interviewees, and the leader herself was irregular and unpredictable in her interactions with me.<sup>31</sup> Mbwira Ndumva (meaning “speak, I am listening”) was eliminated because it was so similar to Duhozanye (meaning “let’s console each other”). Although Mbwira Ndumva did actually appear to encourage more *mutual* empathy than Duhozanye did, much of its most critical program activity (psycho-social support groups) was off limits to me.<sup>32</sup> Thus I was left with four remaining cases, two that were remarkably similar to

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<sup>29</sup> Gahaya Links was actually added late to the study (November of 2008), and allowed me to eliminate another women’s empowerment program that was not quite as intriguing.

<sup>30</sup> However, all three religious organizations also engage to some degree in other projects, including empowerment projects. They range from indirect involvement in orphan’s issues (Umusamaritani W’umdumve and PCR) to extensive direct involvement in other programming areas (AEE).

<sup>31</sup> This organization was fascinating in many ways. It was unique as a Catholic (and atypically charismatic) program conducting healing and reconciliation retreats that brought people of all categories together. The leader had documented visions of genocide well before it actually occurred, and had access to populations nobody else in my study had. But organization leaders tried to control the data I collected, and I was confused by many of our interactions, so I did not incorporate the data from this organization into this dissertation.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews with Mwuramdumva leaders indicated the organization has intentionally reached out to marginalized Hutu women (e.g. women in poverty with husbands in prison). I interviewed both leaders and eight participants at Mwuramdumva, but was not allowed to join their meetings, due to confidentiality concerns.

each other (AEE and PCR), and two that were different from PCR/AEE and from each other in intriguing ways (Gahaya Links and Duhozanye). AEE and PCR both utilized pathways of mutual empathy (for self and other) *and* at least spiritual empowerment. Gahaya Links utilized primarily the (socioeconomic) empowerment pathway, with no formal structure in place for mutual empathy to take place. Duhozanye certainly used empathy, but it was not mutual (i.e., did not engage with the suffering of the “other”). It also employed the (socioeconomic) empowerment pathway, but less directly than Gahaya Links. Duhozanye was the only truly rural-based population, although the other three worked all over the country with both urban and rural populations. Data relevant to the criteria for the study are presented in Table 4.1. Recall that the initial criteria for case selection changed, resulting in the following:

- The final four organizations served both men and women (two mixed, two not).
- All four organizations employed some degree of empowerment and/or empathy in their promotion of reconciliation.
- The criteria of “multi-ethnicity” gave way to other types of diversity with three organizations (PCR, AEE, and Gahaya Links) and a theoretically important case of limited “multi-ethnicity” (Duhozanye).
- All four organizations enjoyed favorable relations with the government but were not deemed dependent on it.
- All four organizations were led by Rwandans, although two (PCR and AEE) had considerable foreign inputs in their initial program design.
- All four organizations served at least 50, and had at least two leaders, as per the original criteria. In reality, all four programs served thousands.
- Three of the organizations (the exception is AEE) were founded in the post-genocide era.
- All four programs were amenable to my regular presence and did not require excessive travel.

Table 4.1 on the next page shows in very brief form how each of the four organizations fit the criteria of the study in terms of population served, importance of diversity, founders and leadership, location, and the year founded. While each of the four organizations are covered in much more depth in Chapter Five, here it is important to note that the right most column, entitled “reconciliation pathways,” shows how empathy and empowerment are employed. Distinctions are made between empathy for self and empathy for the other; and between spiritual empowerment and other types of empowerment (economic, social, and political). Where an organization is marked “indirect” in one of these categories, it simply means that organization may support that pathway, but it does not have activities specifically designed to promote it.

#### Gaining and Maintaining Access

It is worth noting here that I had significant experience in the Great Lakes region of Africa before beginning this research project. I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the North Kivu region of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC) just before the genocide in Rwanda. As I was posted right along the fringe of Rwanda’s western border (north of Goma), I lived among only Hutu and Tutsi. Some families had been in Zaire for generations, while others had fled in recent decades. All spoke *Kinyarwanda*, and referred to themselves as *banyarwanda* in most (but not all) contexts. The groups were visibly distrustful (even hateful) towards each other in Zaire, and I perceived, naively perhaps, that relations seemed more stable among Hutu and Tutsi whenever I traveled to Rwanda. I was shocked and personally devastated when the genocide began in 1994, while I was already stateside. I lost many friends to the genocide, especially when it flowed across the borders into Zaire and both Hutu and Tutsi were, quite literally, hunted down. I started returning to the region more than a decade later, in 2006, when I performed a series of consultancies for a British agency working

**Table 4.1: Data on Criteria for Selected Organizations**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Population Served</b>	<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Founders and Leadership</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year Founded</b>	<b>Reconciliation Pathway(s)</b>
<b>Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR)</b>	4000+ in Rwanda  Initially religious leaders.  Populations served diversifying.	<i>Actively seeking diversity</i>	American founders 2 National Leaders (male, Hutu & Tutsi) 100+ local leaders (all male, H & T) 2-3 Staff in HQ	HQ in Kigali  Retreats throughout country and region	1995/96	<i>Empathy</i> Self (High) Other (High) <i>Empowerment</i> Spiritual (High) Other (indirect)
<b>African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE)</b>	Tens of thousands in retreats.  <i>Initially</i> religious leaders and laypersons.  Many populations.	<i>Actively seeking diversity</i>	1 T male survivor 120 F/T Staff: H & T.  African and foreigners (all program areas)  1000s of volunteers	HQ in Kigali  Centers and projects throughout country	1984 (Healing and Rec retreats start in 1995)	<i>Empathy</i> Self (High) Other (High) <i>Empowerment</i> Spiritual (High) Other (indirect)
<b>Gahaya Links</b>	4000 + Female weavers from all over Rwanda	<i>Passively seeking diversity</i>	Founders: 2 Tutsi Returnees/sisters 10-12 staff in HQ Association leaders (diverse)	HQ in Kigali  50+associations throughout country	~1996, Incorporation 2003.	<i>Empathy</i> Self (indirect) Other (indirect) <i>Empowerment</i> Spiritual (indirect) S-Economic (High)
<b>Duhazanye</b>	3000 + Widow and orphan “survivors” All widows female and Tutsi (few exceptions)	<i>Not seeking diversity</i>	2 T genocide widows <i>1 former leader now in Parliament</i> 4 F/T staff (male and female)	Large rural region, inclusive of city of Butare	1994	<i>Empathy</i> Self (High) Other (indirect) <i>Empowerment</i> Spiritual (indirect) Other (moderate)

with aid organizations in the DRC and Rwanda.

The consultancies gave me access to agencies in Rwanda and, in addition to the personal contacts I had in the region, provided me with resources it would have otherwise taken me a while to develop. Therefore, gaining field access to many organizations was not a real concern. A greater concern was whether, by contacting organizations through mutual friends and colleagues, these organizations would try too hard to make my experience positive and “what I was looking for.” I saw evidence of the distortive effects of trying to please the researcher in my initial interactions with some organizations, so I made a real effort to downplay my work elsewhere, and to emphasize the research as a totally different project I was embarking on. As one contact led to another, and contacts’ “knowledge” of my other work disappeared, the desire to please was less and less of a problem.

With all the organizations I explored during this study, I took a lot of time to inform the leaders and participants/members of the motivations behind my research: that my sole interest was in hearing what people had to say in their own terms rather than assessing them or giving them advice on how to do what they knew best.<sup>1</sup> I continually stressed that I was there in a learning role, though as is often the case with foreign researchers in such settings, their understanding of my knowledge or opinion base was at times inaccurate.<sup>2</sup> I usually shared my personal history in the region and my own need to understand how the genocide happened and how people were recovering from it. I sometimes mentioned (when it seemed appropriate) that I had lost friends to the genocide, so that people would know I was not only a casual observer. Some people

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<sup>1</sup> Although I had preconceived notions of what transformative reconciliation would “look like,” I was uncertain how it would manifest within such an extremely limited political context. I didn’t want to convey any expectation that reconciliation *should* be occurring, especially as the literature indicates that some Rwandans feel pressured to reconcile either by the government or by foreign funders and visitors to Rwanda (Hatzfeld, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> For example, at Duhozanye, several members requested that I come give workshops on reconciliation. I expressed thanks at this invitation and then stressed to them that I in fact was learning from *them* about reconciliation, a statement that was met each time with (it seemed) both confusion and amusement.

explored further, asking me how things appeared to me before the genocide, or whether I perceived any real difference between Hutu and Tutsi. I answered such questions honestly, without expressing firm opinions (as I myself have no clear answers), and subtly directed the inquiry back to them. In many of my interviews within the organizations, I recognized and affirmed my profound respect for the people I met; the enormous challenges they are confronting; and their incredible strength. I did so not only because it helped to establish my intention, but because it was often in keeping with the very nature of our meetings together.

Such an attitude and demeanor might have reduced my ability to chase down contradictions and elisions, but it was consonant with the research strategy of hearing from research participants in their own time and terms, and in particular letting their own process of meaning-making take precedence over mine. As Agar (1980) argues, what matters is what a story tells us about the person or group that generated it, rather than that the story is factually true or false. And over time in these relationships, the elided parts often came back up in different ways.<sup>3</sup>

I also did not attempt to carry on as if I was detached from the setting, or “objective” about the profound needs I saw all around me. Just as I make my claim on Rwandans to help me understand genocide and reconciliation in Rwanda, I acknowledge their (continued) claims on me. I cannot in good conscience willingly receive without also giving. In fact, two leaders of organizations voiced their complaints to me about “researchers who collect all their information, go off and write their books, and don’t even send a report” back to the organization.<sup>4</sup> While I never provided “incentives” for people to talk to me, sometimes members of these programs did express to me a profound

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<sup>3</sup> For example, see the emergence of the issue of rape at the end of my research time at Duhozanye (Chapter Five).

<sup>4</sup> Several persons in government agencies asked me to send them my dissertation when I was done, and complained somewhat sharply about Western researchers who write about them and do not even give them a copy. It is a dilemma for a researcher whose views about the government are not entirely positive, but who hopes to return to Rwanda.



need, usually expressed in a very humble and roundabout manner.<sup>5</sup> With only one exception (described in the section on selection of translators below), I never responded to this on an individual level, but instead approached it at the level of the organization. For example, after several women at Duhozanye expressed their worry about school supplies for the organization's orphans, I obtained a list of priorities from the leader, checked prices on items, and determined there was no way I personally could meet the need. Together with the organization's leader, I pared down the list to the most vulnerable orphans and a minimum of supplies to start the year, and arrived at a contribution I could handle with several friends of mine. In another example, I helped one organization write a grant for assistance from the UNDP to start a particular agricultural project. And in the most common example, three different organizations expressed the need for a website (for both local credibility/visibility and international fundraising/sales). In two of the three cases, I linked them with friends in the US who offered to develop their websites *pro bono*. While I was still in Rwanda, we pulled together photos, videos, and documents, sent them electronically to the developers, and had online conferences to discuss site design. Before I left Rwanda in February of 2009, two of the websites were already up and running, although maintaining them is an ongoing challenge.

The most common way in which I became involved in my research settings was by speaking aloud my prayers of encouragement for the individuals or groups I spent time with. It is not uncommon for Rwandans (especially in the religious programs) to ask visitors to say prayers "to encourage" them in their struggles.<sup>6</sup> Such requests most often came at the end of long times together, when I felt a real sense of fellowship with the

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<sup>5</sup> There were plenty of requests made in demanding and direct ways, but those I dealt with in another fashion altogether.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, it was remarkable to me, how readily Rwandans would invite Westerners to give them encouragement or to "come alongside us" (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009). The bitterness one might expect from the people about the West's abandonment of them was not discernible to me anywhere except in elite or government discourses.

people present. Although I am not accustomed to saying prayers out loud to groups of people, and sometimes struggle to employ terms that are not consistent with my own experience, I was always touched by these requests. I never hesitated to give the gift of a prayer expressing love, profound respect, and hope for the people I was with. In fact, I felt quite inspired in doing so, and as indicated by their responses to me afterwards, I apparently spoke in a way they found encouraging.

Some might argue that such involvements are not typical, or even desirable, strategies for conducting “objective” or credible research. Yet, I willingly accept the ways in which I am implicated in the lives of these people. I believe such a strategy creates more authentic, trusting, and mutual relationship, which likely leads to a deeper (albeit subjective) level of sharing and understanding. Furthermore, my relationships with some of these organizations and people started before the research began, and have continued afterwards. I would no more establish some artificial distance from them to meet a false standard of “objectivity” than I would (by drawing closer to them) claim perfect understanding or knowledge of their circumstances. As Peshkin (1988) argues, between dispassion and a love affair is affection, which reminds us of our obligations to our research subjects, and it is that affection that I willingly felt for many people in this project.

At no time during my research did I feel that my field access was diminished, although in one case my propensity to take notes (partially as a coping mechanism in a religious service I was extremely pressed to tolerate) was explained by my Rwandan host to the congregation as “[my] way of worshipping.” As is clear from the above, I was not only a researcher in these settings, but an involved participant. This came with both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that I had access to activities, meetings, persons, and documents I might otherwise not have been given access to, but this came with a corresponding degree of ethical responsibility. The main disadvantage

is that being closer to the phenomenon means I am certainly more biased (Yin, 2003).<sup>7</sup> Indeed, I did experience the inherent “ambiguity and anxiety” that arise from the interdependence of participant observer and the observed (Merriam, 1998, 103-104).<sup>8</sup> Reflexive strategies to confront this source of bias are discussed below.

### Data Collection

This case study employs multiple methods of data gathering, which are triangulated to provide more convincing interpretations of the data (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2006; Hancock & Angrozinne, 2006). These methods include participant observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, analysis of documents and other textual data, and additional sources of data peculiar to each case. Unique case features required me to be flexible and “opportunistic” about data collection methods (Eisenhardt, 2002), so specific adaptations of data collection for each program are described at more length within the case reports in Chapter Five.

### *Participant Observation*

Participant observation is a method usually associated with ethnographic studies, and is an appropriate method for this study. It allows the outsider (researcher) to gain perspective into the tacit knowledge of insiders by virtue of spending extended time in the cultural context (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). Observation is best when behaviors are unconscious, are socially problematic to admit, when information gained in interviews may not be entirely candid (Angrosino, 2007), or simply because there are limits to what you can learn from what people say (Patton, 1990, p. 21). Given Rwanda’s historical context, current political context, and its notoriously reserved culture (not to mention the

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<sup>7</sup> Yet, even in this, “bias” in understanding a phenomenon one previously found incomprehensible or even repulsive may do more to serve understanding than holding it all at a distance.

<sup>8</sup> As I wrote in my analytical notes (March 2010) while trying to wrestle with some of my concerns about PCR and AEE, “I LOVE these people and cannot ignore the fact that on some level I get what they are trying to do and why. That would be easy [as an academic] but not honest.”

degree of personal and social suffering that has occurred) many things go unsaid in Rwanda, and I knew that reservedness very well.<sup>9</sup> I had lived in the region for three years prior to the genocide and spent almost a year of fieldwork by the end of my field research phase. I have thus internalized many things I was not even aware I was absorbing until I'd see a newer outsider in the context. I feel the Rwandan tendency to suspicion and intrigue, and the seeming intractability of some Rwandan views on historical events.<sup>10</sup> Yet, I also feel the bewildered sense that (as so many Rwandans say) "there were no problems between us before, we lived as neighbors." I understand the way Rwandans speak in metaphors, almost as if things like life, fortune, and even machetes move towards or away from them, drawing them in and letting them out.<sup>11</sup>

However, in the matter of reconciliation I had little internalized sense of what that looks like or feels like in Rwandan culture. Therefore, participant observation methods provided me with entirely new perspectives on some things, while confirming or disconfirming things I had been told or came expecting to see. I conducted unstructured observations within the larger context and within the organizations, including observations on: physical setting and environment; human social environment; planned activities and formal interactions; informal activities and interactions; native language of the program (intentional and unintentional); nonverbal communication; unobtrusive observations; documents; and also what is notable in that it does *not* happen (Patton, 2002). Participant observation methods included both unstructured observations and

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<sup>9</sup> A number of key informants and research subjects made comments to me about the indirect, circular, or "lying" nature of Rwandan culture. My translator at one point said, "That's just the way Rwandans are, they aren't honest." Burnet (2005) has reported similar statements from research participants, and I had heard it many times in my time among Rwandans in Zaire, and in the US.

<sup>10</sup> As just one of hundreds of examples, a young taxi driver insisted to me that Laurent Kabila (whose son is now President of DRC) was former President Mobutu's son (thus justifying the Rwandan ascent to power in DRC), which fit with a political argument he was making, but is beyond even the wildest explanation of regional events in any published work.

<sup>11</sup> The only author I have found who captures this metaphorical quality of Rwandan speech well in his work is French journalist Jean Hatzfeld, the author of three beautifully written books on Rwanda: *Into the Quick of Life* (2005), *Machete Season* (2005), and *Strategy of Antelopes* (2009).

reflexive observations, which are described in the two sections below.

### *Unstructured Observations*

Because of my immersion in the Rwandan context and my sensitivity to taking notes (for social, political, and physical reasons), I made only unstructured observations (Patton, 2002). Although my attention was drawn to many minute parts of Rwandan daily life (for example, the way in which people negotiate where to sit inside the very cramped minibuses, or the possibility of getting a “lift” in a car with no fee at all), I paid closest attention to those aspects of the Rwandan context that pertained to my research interests, “sensitizing concepts” (Patton, 1990, 278) such as reconciliation, recovery, empowerment, forgiveness, statements or reflections about Rwandan history or current events, the *gacaca* and *ingando*, and anything related to how Rwandans negotiate their current political environment. The variety of activities and settings that pertain to this subject is enormous, and while some can be sought out, many cannot. For example, the work crews up in the field above where I lived were there from 6 a.m. until 7 or 8 p.m. every single day during my entire eight-month research period (2008). They had minimal equipment or clothing, or even food and water, and worked all day in the sun. They were clearly released prisoners performing community service (which in *Kinyarwanda* is translated as “work in place of imprisonment”).<sup>12</sup> When I asked two Hutu friends about their welfare, I was shushed immediately warned not to talk to them or about them or even look at them, as “even their families cannot ask after them!” The manner in which these same men in that same field were referred to by Tutsi and Hutu over that eight-month period was starkly different, and not all of it was conveyed in words.

Observations in other settings were more easily planned, including those in churches, *gacaca*, genocide memorials, even recreational settings like public pools and

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<sup>12</sup> A key informant provided this translation of the *Kinyarwanda* term, though generally community service is referred to by its French name, *Travaux Sociaux*.

soccer matches. But in these and other settings (public markets, internet cafes, restaurants, stores, government offices, hotels and guesthouses, public buses, private taxis, etc.), it was usually only possible to take notes for a short period without arousing interest. For example, as mentioned previously, I took notes rapidly during church services in the early part of my fieldwork, as I was intrigued with what sounded like spiritually empowerment messages being conveyed (and personally taxed to tolerate the volume and length of the service). This apparently made others in the setting a bit uncertain, as the pastor explained to them that I took notes as my way of worshipping.<sup>13</sup> The effect of my presence of course needs to be accounted for in the analysis of the data (Patton, 1990, p. 306). When I was sensitive to affecting the context by taking notes, I sometimes digitally recorded what was going on (although this had its own disadvantages) or I made mental notes of things to write down later using mnemonic devices and counting items on my fingers. I occasionally took photos (which aroused less interest than the note-taking in most settings) to remind me of significant events.<sup>14</sup> On other occasions, I had no problems taking notes for long periods, such as when watching TV and listening to the radio (where versions of history, current events, fighting in the DRC, and other such events were conveyed by Rwandans, Africans and non-Africans). For example, during my main fieldwork period (July 2008-February 2009), references to “the genocide against the Tutsi” became increasingly common on Rwandan radio stations, rather than simple references to “the genocide.”

To keep track of what I heard, saw, and felt in the context, I kept at least one of my handwritten field journals with me at all times, as well as a very small pocket journal for running notes when pulling out the larger journal was impossible (e.g. when riding on

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<sup>13</sup> Once this was translated to me, I ceased taking notes at such a rate.

<sup>14</sup> A very common kind of observation that I could not take notes on at the time was what taxi drivers said to me while driving, presumably because of the confidentiality and the unlikelihood that they could ever be identified again. Some of these points of view (often about RPF atrocities or events in DRC) were astonishing, and writing them down would have aroused alarm.

a motorcycle taxi). I made clear distinctions between what was observed in the context and my reflections on those observations by placing a ❖ symbol in front of personal reflections. I indicated items to follow up on later with my translator, a person in the setting, or with one of my key informants with a Q. A large asterisk symbol reminded me upon reviewing my journals in the evening of “action items,” i.e. things I needed to do for the research project, and those items were moved to a running list of research activities to plan. After any period of observation (lasting from five minutes to several hours), I would find a place where I could sit down to expand on the notes of the smaller and bigger journals, usually utilizing a red pen or writing on the slant to distinguish between initial observations and observations added on later reflection. At home every night (and often during the day), I would reflect further on the events of that day in an electronic version of my journal, which would both preserve greater detail and allow deeper analysis. I added descriptive detail wherever I could, as much to prompt my memory as to have descriptive details for reporting purposes. Not knowing what would be relevant later, I erred on the side of too much detail, amassing hundreds of pages of notes in my electronic journal.

Whenever taking notes (or expanding on them later) I attempted to obscure all details that might identify the persons observed, in order to preserve confidentiality. I know some shorthand and have developed some of my own symbols to speed up note taking and obscure the meaning of the notes. Names were often changed to a similar name beginning with the same letter. To avoid overstepping boundaries on taking such notes, I always asked my host if it would be acceptable for me to take notes, and clarified my reasons for doing so.

Although I only performed unstructured observations (Patton, 2002), I did apply some structure to the observations I made within organizations. I broke observations down into four categories, which were physically separated on each page of my journal by quadrants: (1) participation (who is there, who is not); (2) structure (who leads and

how, what protocols are followed, how decisions are made); (3) content (what topics are discussed and how, side activities); and (4) anything else that seemed to be important. Not surprisingly, the fourth category was often used when the purpose of the gathering was not clear or shifted during it, or where the items noted didn't fit into the first three categories. In addition to these four quadrants, I usually drew diagrams of the physical layout of any new settings; the publications and wall-hangings on display, the arrangement of people and objects within the setting, and considered how the "proxemic spacing" of people in space might be a form of communication (Angrosino, 2007). I listened for jokes, stories, gossip, and arguments, as these communicate a lot about program history, morals, stereotypes, social norms, and how the group understands itself within the larger context.

I also viewed a wide variety of unscheduled activities (such as passing interactions between people, mealtimes, viewing people at work, and so on), some of which I made structured observations on after the fact. Mealtimes in particular were important, as behaviors around food and beverage are loaded with (mostly unconscious) cultural meanings (Angrosino, 2007).<sup>15</sup> I observed individuals (usually the leaders of the organizations) in their villages and homes, although such visits were not very frequent, as Rwandans don't immediately invite new friends to their homes in the manner Americans often do. When I did visit leaders' houses, I was able to observe how they interacted with their families, guests, neighbors, officials, orphans under their care, and people working for them. I saw firsthand how they make a living and what their socioeconomic status is, how the association interfaces with their life, what other reconciliation activities they participated in, how they refer to the association with other people, and so on. For example, at the home of the leader of Good Samaritans, I sat through a series of entries

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<sup>15</sup> For example, in pre-genocide Rwanda it was common for people (especially in rural areas) to share banana beer (*uragwa*) out of a calabash with a single straw. This behavior is still practiced in some areas, but has fallen out of use in others. I occasionally heard a comment about sharing or not sharing a straw with someone as an indicator of whether they were "neighborly" again or not.



and exits from the bedroom in which I was sitting, as different people of the association were handled in different ways and came into and out of the room—some of them introduced to me and others not. As I had seen many of these people at services, seeing them in the leader's home gave me insight into the informal structure of the organization, which was quite a bit different from the formal structure.

With every organization, I made every effort to attend meetings large and small, as these are sites of legitimation of social relations and cultural values, as well as places to display and reveal status through behavior and speech acts. They reproduce structures of everyday life, creating order (conservatism) and disorder (transformation) (Shwartzmann, 1993). Some of the organizations had quite a few meetings, while others almost never did. For example, I attended several meetings at the sector level for Duhozanye (each of them lasting several hours), as well as a General Assembly meeting (three hours), many smaller meetings with just the leadership of the organization (these varied in length), and most importantly the 14th year anniversary celebration dinner. At PCR and AEE, I primarily attended retreats (three days long) and informal meals (one to three hours long) with the leaders, but at AEE I also attended several devotionals (one hour long), a meeting and a meal with a rape victims group (four hours), and multiple visits to AEE programs (from one to five hours each). My attendance at Gahaya Links was limited to the times the women came together to weave and talk (usually about three hours at a stretch), but also to when the leaders came in to negotiate contracts and undergo quality control (up to two hours on each Friday). I was almost always treated as a special guest and observer at these meetings, rather than an active contributor. The exceptions were when I discussed website design with Duhozanye and Good Samaritans, product sales in the US with Gahaya Links, and the larger discussion around Rwandan reconciliation that took place over meals with AEE and PCR leaders.

With both observations and with informal conversations, I paid close attention to the language identification principle (identifying the language used for each entry so that

cultural meanings are distinct) and the verbatim principle (Spradley, 1979), which enhances the credibility of the account (Fetterman, 1998). Word choices and idea construction vary with language, and the choice of language is often an indicator of intended audience. I was sometimes excluded by language (though an interpreter was always handy) and at other times included by it, as when a person would switch out of *Kinyarwanda* so that only I could understand them (or to show their level of sophistication). Thus, I was at times privy to viewpoints on the current situation, the organization, or conflict and reconciliation in Rwanda that were different from what was being said in the context.

### *Reflexive Observations*

The interpretivist paradigm assumes the social world is local, temporally situated, fluid, context-specific, and shaped in conjunction with the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109). This kind of research cannot be “objective” (leaving aside the issue of whether any kind of research can be objective), and therefore a reflexive accounting of my subjectivity is essential both for trustworthiness of the study and for my own growth. Reflexivity is most often treated as a self-reflection and acknowledgement of one’s *positionality*, and the way in which that affects the interpretations one draws. Positionality includes likes and dislikes, characteristics, values, backgrounds and pastimes, vested interests and expectations, (Thomas, 2009) and particularly status characteristics, including class, race, gender, and ethnicity (Bailey, 2006). However, the common statements of status in qualitative studies (which for me would be, “I am a white American female of Irish descent from a middle-class background”) fail to capture the most salient, and potentially more problematic (or productive), dimensions of my subjectivity. Seeing subjectivity in terms of positionality leaves a lot more room for things I do not know about myself to come into view during the research process, and for those things to be very specific to my own experience base. That experience base

disposes me to see (and to *not* see) certain things. Bringing them into view requires “look[ing] for the warm and the cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings, the experiences I wanted more of or wanted to avoid, and when I felt moved to act in roles beyond those necessary to fulfill my research needs” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18). This requires a systematic way of monitoring the self within the research project, not because doing so will dispel subjectivity, but because the reader and the writer can be more clear about what is the subject and what is the researcher’s self (Peshkin, 1988).

Keeping a personal journal (as well as tracking personal reactions in my field journal) to reflect on my thoughts, fears, reactions, extremely unpleasant (or socially unacceptable) reactions to events is not at all a new thing for me, as I have been keeping a personal journal for many years. However, it was particularly important during this study for me to monitor my reactions to events, as I found myself angry and confused during the early part of my research about the political situation in Rwanda, and personally invaded and stretched in the later part of my research by the evangelistic phase of my project. As Peshkin (1988) notes, it’s easy (and perhaps all too common) to present one’s findings in a way that intentionally or unintentionally “strikes back” at or represents unfairly the parties one is studying. I didn’t want to do this, and in fact in trying to find a way to be fair to others *and* authentic with myself, I added months to the completion of this work. Playing the “believing game” rather than the “doubting game” (Belenky et al, 1986) with both the government and the evangelical groups opened me up to seeing things I would not have seen otherwise, both about these parties and about myself.

Many suggestions for monitoring subjectivity are abstract and hard to implement, but Peshkin (1988) provides one helpful way to think about it, which is to recognize the multiple I’s in any one person’s identity. I found that this neatly captured many of the most notable subjective dilemmas I had during this research project. I knew I walked in with a Survivor I, but also knew there were serious differences between my Survivor I

and the survivors of Rwanda. So it took me a while to see that what resonates for me with Rwandans today is not so much the nature of trauma from which we have survived but our need to make meaning of that suffering -- a personal striving and seeking to find “sense” in things that are quite likely impossible to make sense of.<sup>16</sup> As part of that Meaning-making I, there is a strong Forgiveness-accountability I, which is so convinced that we are all accountable for the social systems that we create (from our families to the U.N.), that I can be quite judgmental of those who seek to avoid responsibility for their actions.<sup>17</sup> In the early part of my research project, the guilt of having been evacuated from the region before the genocide gave way to anger and disgust about the genocide, and in particular the tendency of so many Rwandans to place the blame elsewhere, particularly the government (for common people) or on the colonial powers and/or the international community (for the government).<sup>18</sup> By journaling about this and writing to friends and committee members about it, I found more compassion for myself and my counterparts, and I also really felt how my Forgiveness-Accountability I (and my Western mind’s bias towards individual accountability) was shaping my experience and perception.<sup>19</sup>

Later in my research, I decided I could no longer ignore the role of religious

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<sup>16</sup> And if it is “found,” it is always possible it was created.

<sup>17</sup> The connection of forgiveness and accountability might not be obvious. Basically, it’s a personal belief that once we really accept our interconnectedness to *all that is* and how we participate in creating it both individually and globally, it becomes clear how drawing bold lines between victims and perpetrators (and dehumanizing perpetrators) will only perpetuate the problem. However, being judgmental of someone who does not see it this way can hardly be a solution either.

<sup>18</sup> Like biblical Adam blaming Eve and Eve blaming the snake (Campbell, 1988). The sense of disgust I had in the early part of my 2008 fieldwork was actually best expressed by one of my key informants (Hutu), who said, “Here I have blood on my clothes from killing my Tutsi wife and neighbors, and I say, ‘But the Belgians are responsible for making us hate each other, and the international community abandoned us.’ How is this possible? Where is the white person who raised a machete during the genocide?” (data from interview on November 10, 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda). Note: this particular Rwandan is speaking hypothetically about killing his wife, he was absent during the genocide.

<sup>19</sup> This bias towards individual accountability is also apparent in the work of Staub and Pearlman (2001; 2005), who seem to be confronting Rwandans lack of personal responsibility, while other researchers (Levy, 2009) have found this inappropriate to the collectivist culture of Rwanda. Note: by this focus on collectivist/individualist mindset, I do not mean to suggest by blaming the international community, the government of Rwanda is acting from a collectivist mindset.

programs in Rwandan reconciliation, although the last thing I wanted to do was create more invitations to spend more time in hot packed churches for five or six hours on a Sunday, unable to even go to the bathroom because of my honored place in the front row, where I was regularly called upon to introduce myself and give my testimony. The volume of the speakers was incredibly difficult on my already impaired hearing, such that even wearing earplugs did not bring it to a comfortable level. And having been raised as a sit-quietly-in-the-pew Catholic in the U.S., I simply was not accustomed to all the pressure to *perform* in these churches— not only singing, dancing and praying out loud, but doing so with spiritual “abandon” that would have felt like anything but to me. But doing nothing aroused very concerned questions like, “Aren’t you a believer!?” or “Are you ill?” so I did my best to find a level of involvement I could be comfortable with. In short, the Survivor I felt trapped at times in the churches, and the Self-Care I found ways to hide out at a hotel pool on some Sundays just to survive. Surprisingly enough, these churches and reconciliation retreats did end up having a positive and enduring effect on me, as I began to realize that the very thing they were promoting was something important to this study, something I myself have never done completely— *surrender*. And because of the very personal relationship with Jesus they were preaching, a real opening occurred for me to experience my own spirituality in a new (though not explicitly Christian) way. Nobody was more surprised than I that this project drove me into an inquiry about the East African Revival and other movements within Christianity that are responses to the same spiritual disconnect I felt growing up in a Catholic church that did nothing at all about social justice.

Lastly, there is the Pedagogical I, who believes in empowering, personal, experiential, community-based, non-dogmatic learning. I didn’t go to Rwanda expecting much of my kind of approach, because of Rwanda’s very solid history in didactic education. So, it is notable that the programs I sensed were the most effective (see Chapters Six and Seven) were those utilizing fairly Western blends of interpersonal

encounter, emotional and spiritual healing, and experiential ritual/ activity—all delivered in a concise learning progression with some teaching.<sup>20</sup> The Pedagogical I may thus have biased my findings, although it also does not favor fundamentalism or evangelism (Christian or otherwise), which would tend to drive my bias in the other direction.

### *Semi-structured and Unstructured Interviews*

I conducted both semi-structured interviews (using interview protocols) and unstructured interviews during several field research periods. I interviewed a very wide variety of people in both organizational and non-organizational settings. To avoid confusion in the types of interviews conducted, the following section first describes the format and content of interviews conducted within the four organizations at the center of this study, including interviews with leaders and interviews with organization members or participants. Then the interview sample selection process is described. Next, an entirely different category of interviews (entitled *Contextual Interviews*) is summarized. And finally, the section closes with a description of how translators were selected.

### *Interviews within Organizations*

Within the organizations I studied, I conducted mostly semi-structured interviews, and protocols varied depending on the purpose of that particular interview. For example, in the very first interview with an organization, I began with a thorough coverage of the purpose of my research, my stance as a learner, the kinds of involvement I was seeking, and the important terms of informed consent.<sup>21</sup> As the conversation moved to the organization's work, I would focus my questions on the first, second, and third research

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<sup>20</sup> My Forgiveness-Accountability I also looks very favorably on some of the practices in two of the organizations discussed at length in Chapter Five (best represented by the activity of “standing in the gap” at AEE).

<sup>21</sup> I gave copies of my business card, and the consent form itself to the leaders of each organization to keep on file (consent forms were available in English, French, and in *Kinyarwanda* and French. The University Committee on Human Subjects had requested that consent forms be covered orally, which they were with each interviewee.

questions of this study (shown in Table 4.2).<sup>22</sup> Each of the research questions was broken down into subtopic areas, for which I developed several sample questions to help me get started and to assure that I had answers for all relevant areas before the interview was over (see Table 4.2 for Organizational Interview Protocol).

In reality, however, I rarely had to ask any of the questions shown in the protocol, because organization leaders would readily launch into a description of the organization's humble beginnings in the aftermath of genocide, the various dilemmas encountered along the way, and the organization's successes and failures in promoting recovery and reconciliation. It was not at all uncommon for the first interview to go for several hours and for it to journey well into the deeper questions of this research (such as, how does one make sense of such incomprehensible events, or what kind of reconciliation is really possible with perpetrators who are still threatening survivors). After all, these were all programs that claimed they promote reconciliation, and leaders generally had a lot to say about the subject. As this first organizational interview was typically held in the organization's office, these visits most often evolved into a tour of the organization, introductions to staff and participants, and an informal lunch.

If an organization seemed to warrant further study, I would conduct a second and/or third organizational interview with the leader(s). These were often more like visits than interviews, and usually lasted from one to three hours. At this time, I would try to confirm or disconfirm any impressions I was forming, ask additional questions, and to check on the ongoing effects of my presence. I also continued to gain more detail on research questions one and two, but would go further into research question three to get more of a sense of whether each organization was really facilitating encounters with the *other* "other," and if so, how. If the organization seemed to be a good fit, we

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<sup>22</sup> Recall that the fifth and sixth research questions ("How does transformative learning theory assist in understanding the learning in this organization?" and "How does the learning in this organization assist in developing transformative learning theory?" respectively) were not field-based questions, but rather guided my data collection and analysis.

**Table 4.2: Organizational Interview Protocol**

Research Question	Sub-topic Areas	Sample Questions
1) How and why did this organization form?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origins of program</li> <li>• Specific needs addressed</li> <li>• Founders and membership</li> <li>• Mission and purpose</li> <li>• Organizational structure</li> <li>• Situation within context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the organization get started?</li> <li>• What needs did organization form to respond to?</li> <li>• How did founders come together to form this organization?</li> <li>• How are members recruited?</li> <li>• What does the organization attempt to achieve?</li> <li>• What obstacles and supports did/do they have?</li> <li>• What precedents and partners were/are there for this organization?</li> <li>• In what ways has the organization changed over time?</li> </ul>
2) What learning (intended and unintended) occurs in this organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational approach</li> <li>• Organization's activities</li> <li>• Orientation to contextual factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What philosophy guides the organization's activities?</li> <li>• What does the organization do?</li> <li>• What has the organization accomplished?</li> <li>• How are decisions made and activities administered?</li> <li>• How has this organization helped its members? Its founders?</li> <li>• What are organization members able to do now that they didn't do before?</li> <li>• How is internal conflict handled? How is external conflict handled?</li> <li>• What are ongoing challenges?</li> <li>• How do organization and its members interact with outside actors?</li> </ul>
3) How does this learning support personal and/or social recovery and/or reconciliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to reconciliation and recovery</li> <li>• Experiences of reconciliation and recovery</li> <li>• Persistent challenges/supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do leaders and members see what happened in Rwanda?</li> <li>• How has organization assisted its members in recovery? In reconciliation/forgiveness?</li> <li>• What are impediments and promoters of reconciliation and recovery?</li> </ul>



would start arranging for interviews with individual members and/or with the leaders themselves. In truth, there was often overlap in these interviews (e.g., discussing a leader's personal history as a survivor in the very first interview). These initial organizational interviews rarely had a confidential feel to them, and often people were coming in and out of the room while we were talking.

At the next level, individual interviews were conducted with the members or participants of these organizations. These were all semi-structured, using the same basic questions in the protocol given in Table 4.2, but adapted for personal inquiry and leaving the answers much more open. For example, rather than asking what needs the organization was trying to address, I might ask, "What were the biggest problems you faced after the genocide?" Instead of asking how the organization started, I might ask, "When did you join the organization and why?" And instead of asking what the organization's approach is to reconciliation and recovery, or even "Has this organization helped you reconcile?" (which seemed certain to bias the answer), I might ask, "How has this organization helped you?"

These interviews varied quite a bit in length, from a few very short interviews at Gahaya Links (<20 minutes) to very long interviews at Duhozanye (>two hours). Longer interviews were especially common with the leaders of the organizations, who without exception had personal experiences of division and violence in Rwanda, coupled with more analytical perspectives about the challenges inherent in recovery and reconciliation. For example, I interviewed Daphrose Mukarutamu (the President of Duhozanye) on many occasions, totaling perhaps 10 hours of her personal reflection on her life, survival during the genocide, and her thoughts about reconciliation in Rwanda. I was not always able to hold the interview structure with some interviewees. For example, a widow at Duhozanye spoke for an hour and 45 minutes about how she survived the genocide, in answer to the question, "When did you join Duhozanye?" I let her go on for multiple reasons, first among them the riveting story; second, cultural expectations regarding

attentive listening and respect due to women of her age; and third, my own tendency to listen without hurry. However, such an unhurried approach was not sustainable for all the organizations, and I got better at redirecting interviews as the study proceeded.

Individual interviews varied in their location and level of confidentiality. Usually, after a starting sample of interviewees was selected, a location was chosen where I, my translator, and the individual could speak in confidence. The location was usually dictated by convenience (and therefore was often on the organization's grounds), but in some cases this was also seen as socially necessary. For example, for some widow survivors (and rescuers) harassment often followed any visit by outsiders, because it was assumed these outsiders brought gifts and money.<sup>1</sup> Other interviews occurred in a spontaneous manner during or after retreats and were therefore relatively short and varied in their degree of confidentiality. Interviews at Gahaya Links were unique in that many of them were held while the women weavers were busily weaving, and on one occasion I "interviewed" a whole group at once.

I tried to begin all individual interviews with an unhurried conversation about surface matters, such as the distance traveled or the lack of rain, as is the Rwandan fashion. After some time getting comfortable with each other, I'd start with a standard script on where I was from, why I was there, and why I traveled all this way to come hear from them. My intentions and purpose were impossible to convey completely, but I took time in explaining my motivations (and as mentioned previously, sometimes my history in the region), stressing how open I was to whatever might come up in our conversation. I made it clear in numerous alternate ways that their participation was entirely their choice in content and degree. As the University Committee on Human Subjects had asked me to use oral consent forms, I made sure to cover that content in its entirety, despite the very common response from respondents (usually delivered with a puzzled

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<sup>1</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews, 2006-2009.

chuckle) that if they didn't want to say something, they surely were not going to say it.<sup>2</sup> I always asked if the respondent was comfortable with me recording the interview, and explained my reasons for doing so. On only one occasion did an interviewee hesitate about the recording, so I immediately set the tape recorder aside.<sup>3</sup>

After the preliminaries, I usually began an interview with some questions about how, why, and when they had joined the organization.<sup>4</sup> Later, I would move to questions about how the organization had helped them, or what they had learned through their involvement. Without much effort practically every conversation revolved around reconciliation, recovery from the genocide, and how different their lives were now. I followed the interview protocol loosely, coming back to areas that had not been covered sufficiently, but otherwise allowing the conversation to flow naturally.<sup>5</sup> I asked many follow-up questions, whether to clarify or to indicate that I was listening closely. I didn't take many notes during the interview (to avoid distraction) but did try to note changes in body language or non-verbal cues that occurred, along with the minute marker on my digital recorder for when they occurred. I comfortably utilized Rwandan forms of active listening (e.g., "hmm" and "eh!?" to express empathy and disbelief, respectively). At times I would reflect on what was said, or share my perspective.

I was not confrontative at all in interviews, recognizing that the point is not to get to the "truth," (if that were even possible) but rather to hear what the person believes, sees, and remembers as their truth. Towards the end of the interview, I would ask the

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<sup>2</sup> I came to think there is a degree of condescension in our way of viewing sensitive subjects as something interviewees don't have control over or cannot manage. Rwandans are notorious for their reserved nature, and managing expression of thoughts and emotion to me did not appear to concern them.

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, many of my interviews were not recorded because of their spontaneous nature at retreats (this is especially the case with AEE and PCR).

<sup>4</sup> Although Bailey (2006) advises not to ask demographic questions to begin with, almost invariably at my first question, they would ask me (or my translator) if I wanted their name and age first. Sometimes they provided more, such as their family name and lineage, or the region of their birth (and in the case of widows, their husband's name).

<sup>5</sup> There is a tendency for survivors to give their survival testimonies, whether because they assume that is expected or simply because they wanted to. I tended to follow the interviewee where he/she went, and then attend to gaps in questions towards the end.

interviewee if they had any questions for me, and at times they did (usually about whether I had children or a husband, but sometimes about the content of the interview). In closing the interviews, I always expressed gratitude to them for taking the time to share their experiences with me, and emphasized that if any questions or concerns came up for them after the interview, they could contact me personally or through an intermediary. Usually, the closing of the interview took a fair bit of time, as abrupt leave-taking in Rwanda is not very polite, and seemed especially so given the content of the conversations. As mentioned previously, on several occasions, I was asked to say a prayer aloud for that individual or for a group of individuals who had arrived together that day for an interview. I found myself doing this sincerely and wholeheartedly, and all indications were that the interviewees appreciated this engagement with both their suffering and courage.

At the close of my research period with an organization, I would meet with the leader(s) to find closure on my time with them. With three organizations I originally spent time with (Duhozanye, Mbwira Ndumva, and Good Samaritans) these last meetings became in-depth personal interviews with the leaders. The purpose of these final interviews was to gain greater insight into the motivations and vision the leaders had had in forming the organization and the underlying experiences, assumptions, and beliefs that had shaped them. These were much more narrative in format and generally (though not always) began with a question about how that person had become involved in this kind of work. I was more likely to address inconsistencies and elisions in these sessions, recognizing that where accounts differ from recognized facts, I could begin to explore how or why these divergent views were constructed (Yow, 1994), and gain greater insight into the identity and personality of the leader. This exposed me to ideas I hadn't considered before, and on a few occasions the leader reflected that he/she had also gained greater understanding through our work together. As other Rwanda scholars have noted, identity, memory, and politics in Rwanda are being constantly shaped and reshaped

(Hintjens, 2009), and these interviews only served to highlight that complex interplay.

I did not need a translator for many of my interviews with organization leaders, as only Duhozanye had a leader who did not speak English or French. But for any sessions in which I did use a translator, I had a regular habit of debriefing the interviews of the day with them, in order to confirm or disconfirm impressions I had formed. This also allowed me to return to that organization or that individual again with follow-up questions designed to clear up confusion. As described in much greater detail in Chapter Five, my translation at each organization differed greatly. Some organizations (beyond the final four) clearly expected me to use an internal translator (e.g. IBUKA), while others encouraged me to bring my own, or provided one on request. Additionally, for contextual interviews in particular (discussed below), I chose translators who were least likely in my opinion to pose an obstacle to the interviewee's free expression.

Lastly, I held many unstructured interviews with organization members on a number of occasions, but these were more like conversations that were going well enough that I turned my recorder on. They also tended to revolve around the research questions, although they followed tangents into related areas (for example, reflections on context, such as whether the *gacaca* was helpful to them, or what they thought about the arrest of Rose Kabuye in Germany).<sup>6</sup> An exception to this would be my developing friendships with some organization leaders; because of this, our conversations often went back and forth between us.

### *Interview Sample Selection*

Once the selection of cases was made, the interviews with organization leaders were straightforward. With the exception of AEE, all of the organizations had two core

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<sup>6</sup> Rose Kabuye was a Lt. Colonel for the RPF and served as the Chief of State Protocol under Kagame. She was arrested in Germany in (under France's international arrest warrant) in late 2008 as one of many suspects in the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane.

leaders, one of whom was secondary to the other in some distinct way.<sup>7</sup> In AEE and PCR, the leaders were men, but in all the other organizations, they were women, and with Gahaya Links, they were sisters. Three of the six organizations were led by people who had returned to Rwanda from the diaspora after the genocide. I interviewed them all, though not always to the same degree. I held quite in-depth interviews with one leader of each organization, which was usually the primary leader, but in one case interviewed the secondary because she worked most closely with me and the primary was traveling.

The selection of program participants was quite a bit more complicated, and therefore is described in some detail here. From the beginning of the 2008 phase of research, I was seeking depth and diversity along two dimensions: age; and ethnicity or experience category. In the case of age, I was curious as to whether a person who was at least a young adult during the 1959-1962 transition from colonialism to independence (i.e., born before 1945) would interpret and experience the genocide or post-genocide reconciliation differently from one who was born in 1959 or later. In short, if a person had grown up witnessing ethnic violence, had run into hiding or witnessed others saving those being pursued, how might this shape later experiences of violence and recovery in Rwanda?<sup>8</sup> Therefore, with all the organizations I studied, I made an effort (only failing in the case of Gahaya Links) to find at least two people of age 63 or older to interview, and to otherwise focus on those of age 53 and younger (to avoid blurring the data sets).

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<sup>7</sup> Among the six organizations I studied in depth (only four of which are analyzed here), a very common leadership pattern was two women: one a visionary for the program and the other a very close and supportive administrator. For Gahaya Links, they were Tutsi returnees and sisters. For Mwuramdumva, they were Tutsi returnees. Duhozanye was led by two Tutsi survivors/widows, and Good Samaritans was led by two strong women whose ethnicity was uncertain until the very end of the study. PCR was led by a distinctive pair of men (one Hutu, one Tutsi) in the lead. AEE did not have the paired leader relationship, but was led primarily by men. This reflects a larger pattern of female leadership in Rwanda (Ryan & Balocating, 2010), but male leadership in the churches (Longman, 2010). However, I did on multiple occasions interview one female leader of an evangelical church located in downtown Kigali.

<sup>8</sup> In short, if perspective transformation truly is a “uniquely adult” learning process (as claimed by Mezirow, 1978b), then early experiences of genocidal violence would become part of the young child’s meaning perspective, and therefore the events of 1994 would presumably be less likely to precipitate a perspective transformation. This study did find compelling evidence to view age in this way, but the topic was eventually deemed beyond the scope of the study.

In practice, such an age selection required almost no effort on my part. I also avoided interviewing those with very fresh experiences of the organization (i.e., less than a year as a member).

Selecting interviewees during the earlier months of fieldwork (before the study expanded to include religious groups), I attempted to interview women from multiple ethnicity/ experience categories, and especially those silenced in public discourses. Although the organizations I was spending time with had been referred to as “multi-ethnic,” it was important to get beyond ethnicity to interview different experience categories, i.e. new caseload returnees (Hutu), old caseload returnees (Tutsi), survivors (Tutsi), and suspected *genocidaires* (Hutu), as described previously. But it seemed very blunt and potentially risky to use these terms, so I initially spoke in loose terms about the kinds of people I would like to interview.<sup>9</sup> Once I expanded the study to include religious groups, I didn’t need to say anything more than, “I’d like to talk to people who have had all sorts of experiences in Rwanda,” to get survivors, women whose husbands were in prison, “rescuers” (Hutu who saved Tutsi), and confessed *genocidaires*.<sup>10</sup> The expansion of the study to include religious organizations largely, but never quite completely, achieved the purpose of optimizing diversity because the Hutu who are most silenced are those who suffered abuses at the hands of the RPF. I did not meet any such people within the organizations I studied, although I did meet them outside the organizations.

The actual selection of interviewees differed with each organization. While I initially expected to have one-on-one meetings with the leaders to determine a pool of

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<sup>9</sup> For example, I might say I’d like to talk to widows, single women, and women whose husbands are in prison or out of the country, and this is a fairly good way at getting at diversity of experience (the first are more likely to be Tutsi survivors, while the last are more likely to be Hutu).

<sup>10</sup> Reconciliation programs often include people who have killed, and their perspectives are important to understanding transformative reconciliation. I did go to extra lengths to assure the two confessed killers I interviewed of confidentiality and sensitivity to their story, to which they both responded mirthfully that if they weren’t comfortable talking about these things, they wouldn’t be there.

likely interviewees (and steeled myself for the biases that might arise from this sampling method), I instead found that some organizations left it open for anyone to volunteer, while others selected people for me. With Duhozanye, an announcement was made at a monthly meeting that I wanted to talk to women about their experiences with Duhozanye. The women were asked who wanted to talk to me, and many hands were raised. At this point a lively discussion about who I should interview ensued. They eventually mutually agreed that I should talk to women with different experiences that had been at Duhozanye for different lengths of time. Volunteers were chosen and arrangements were made to interview them the following week at the headquarters. After that set of interviews was conducted, I asked the leadership if I could speak with women with somewhat different experiences than those I had already interviewed (particularly Hutu). Some options were discussed, and several more interviews were arranged. Still later, meetings of the local sector were being held and I interviewed several of those women.<sup>11</sup>

At PCR, where a climate of testimonial prevailed, I held spontaneous interviews and conversations with participants of the current retreat (as well as former participants who were now facilitators or were visiting the retreat for celebration), based only on their enthusiasm for sharing their experience. As these retreats were often focused on the needs of religious leaders, and religious leaders are usually (though not always) men in Rwanda, I interviewed more men than women at these sites. I also conducted multiple lengthier interviews for PCR during a one-day meeting in Kigali, which had been arranged specifically for my research. At this meeting, there were five men and three women interviewed. With Gahaya Links, I interviewed multiple “master weavers” (i.e. women who led small weaver associations in their own regions) at the center in Kigali,

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<sup>11</sup> Similarly, with Mwuramdumva, one of the leaders described my research at a confidential meeting (I was not present) and asked who might like to participate. She encouraged people with different experiences and elderly women to come talk to me. A number of women volunteered and in the next couple of weeks I interviewed them when they returned for meetings. These were the only study participants I “paid” for their time, in the sense that I paid for their transport to and from the headquarters for the interview, as requested by one of the association’s leaders.



and in the following week visited one master weaver's rural group in order to interview those women also. On both occasions, I simply interviewed all the women that were there. With AEE, I held all interviews (except those with leaders) during the weekend retreats they held, and again some of these people were former participants of retreats.<sup>12</sup> These interviews were also spontaneous and wrapped up in the testimonial atmosphere of the retreat. The final samples for interviews are summarized within the case report for each organization in Chapter Five.

### *Contextual Interviews*

I also conducted a wide variety of interviews that were outside of the organizations, and which provided me with data on the overall context. Therefore, I call interviews of this category "contextual interviews." These were very informal interviews, sometimes unscheduled and impromptu, and other times scheduled enough in advance that I could prepare to ask questions that were shaped by where I was in the research project and by that particular person's area of expertise. Generally these interviews were not problematic from a confidentiality point of view, as respondents were speaking in their official roles (or made note when they were not). They were held in mutually convenient locations, such as the office of the respondent or at a popular café, and lasted for up to three hours depending on mutual interest. I recorded some of these interviews and made notes on others, due to excessive background noise and the difficulty of transcribing such conversations. Interviews with government and non-governmental agency leaders often produced documents of relevance to reconciliation and reconstruction. Some of these interviews were a bit tricky for me to conduct, given the skepticism with which I had come to view reconciliation asserted from above rather than below. However, I always maintained a supportive demeanor in these interviews,

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<sup>12</sup> Although selection at AEE and PCR provided a somewhat haphazard "longitudinal" view on interviewees' experiences, this was not at all operationalized.

due to my respect for the enormity of the problem and my need to understand it in Rwandan terms rather than my own, as well as my need for security.<sup>13</sup>

Contextual interviews usually but not always covered topics in the interface between this study's questions and a particular person's area of expertise in regards to Rwanda. They included the director of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, the former Speaker of the Rwandan Parliament (now in exile), human rights lawyers, a key consultant for the government on gender and the national reconciliation process, two former staff members of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (one of them now a pastor at a church), staff persons at the genocide memorials, leaders of non-profit organizations, journalists, and innumerable informal interactions with Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda, the DRC, and the US.<sup>14</sup> For a period, I was actively seeking perspectives from Hutu "rescuers" and accessed a number of them through the survivor's organization IBUKA (meaning *remember* in Kinyarwanda), and I interviewed them for their perspectives on reconciliation in Rwanda.

I also used a number of key informants, from all experience categories, both in Rwanda and in the US. These conversations were either recorded or I took extensive notes on them (either at the time or immediately upon leaving?). However, it must be said that a disproportionate number of my key informants and friends are Tutsi males, if for no other reason than that they are free to speak of their experiences (whereas many Hutu are not). Furthermore, one Hutu key informant told me it was wise for me to work with Tutsi translators so as not to arouse suspicion, though I had not made this choice consciously. In actuality, I tried not to depend too heavily on any one informant, no matter how knowledgeable and articulate, in order to not limit myself to their views

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<sup>13</sup> Researchers to Rwanda are sometimes followed, as I clearly was when I was meeting with certain personalities in Kigali (I kept seeing the same man sitting alone at neighboring tables). However, I never felt under threat, partially because I didn't publicly express criticism and if I had, I would be more likely escorted out of the country than harmed.

<sup>14</sup> Notably, some of the most enlightening conversations I had were with taxi drivers (either motorcycle or car), presumably because it was entirely confidential and the driver not very identifiable.

(Patton, 2002). I made a lot of effort to hear the views of Hutu, going so far as to arrange interviews with both of the Hutu women who worked in places I stayed (and who had lost their husbands to RPF violence). Had I not done so, I would not have heard as many divergent opinions as I did, for these opinions were not being expressed within the organizations I studied. I also kept my trickiest interviews (e.g. with the editor of a now-banned independent newspaper in Rwanda) until the very last days of my fieldwork, to avoid complicating my project with suspicions or putting anyone at risk.

### *Selection of Translators*

Selecting appropriate translators for this project was a complicated process. Ethnicity was a crucial consideration in my selection of a translator for each setting, yet this was further complicated by gender, age, language proficiencies, experience category, degree of religiosity, access and/or perceived insider status for chosen organizations, and personal and political stances towards reconciliation in Rwanda. Added to this were the practical concerns of regular availability, willingness to leave Kigali for days at a time, a reasonable fee for services, and ability to conduct simultaneous translation comfortably. Most important of all was an empathetic presence and willingness to hear the stories of people who have endured very profound trauma, including Hutu.

As I am fluent in French and English, and proficient in Swahili, I was able to conduct many interviews on my own, but for interviews in *Kinyarwanda* I sought one translator to do all my research with me (hoping he or she would also serve as a research assistant). I used a variety of avenues to find a woman for this role, suspecting that the members of women's organizations would more freely speak through a female translator, while any men I interviewed would probably be less concerned about the gender issue. After multiple interviews with women who charged too much, or presented troublesome points of view regarding the research topic, I found a young woman who spoke English quite well and who ended up translating for me on all of my interviews for Duhozanye.

She was a Tutsi returnee from Burundi, seemed to be a very good listener and appeared to establish loving and respectful relationships with all of the women we interviewed. She became involved in the setting in the most seamless of ways, and often had observations that were helpful to my research.

However, I belatedly discovered that her youth presented an obstacle to women speaking about rape with me, as women in Rwanda consider that to be an issue for “women, not girls” (Burnet, 2005). This reality became apparent to me quite late in my process with Duhozanye, when I sat with the *Kinyarwanda*-only leader, using a French-speaking widow to translate. The tone of the conversation was completely different than ever before, as they asked me questions about my husband and lack of children, and then they began ever so quietly to speak about rape, and how it is the hardest wound to forgive. I was stunned, having previously assumed myself to be more an outsider than my translator; but in this sensitive territory, I was more of an insider.

PCR and AEE obviously preferred to provide their own translators, although the disadvantage to this was that translation shifted frequently from one person to the next, and the quality of translation varied considerably (especially at PCR). Sometimes translation was provided by the organization because they felt members would be more comfortable that way, and indeed this appeared to be the case with Mbwira Ndumva . The translator was clearly beloved and trusted by the members, and many of them shared much more detail about their physical and sexual torture than was typical.

One organization (IBUKA) appeared to assert control over the content of the interviews I conducted with Hutu women “rescuers” by providing their own translator, who otherwise had been on vacation. I found my time with the provided translator to be exceedingly difficult, and ethically troublesome. At times, a woman rescuer would talk for minutes and he would only translate a few sentences into French. If I asked him to translate more of what was being said, he looked at me with a blank face and did nothing differently. I developed the very distinct impression at times that he was badgering the

women, or cutting them off just when they were saying something he didn't want to translate. When I asked him whether I could give them a small gift in exchange for their time (sometimes hours of their day), he replied curtly that they "deserved nothing" for having done what "everyone should have done." This was most extreme with a woman who clearly had a broken arm, and he would not allow me to arrange transport for her to the hospital. I was intensely aware of her pain, and also aware that going against his wishes would compromise future researchers' work with IBUKA, or worse. As we left the woman's house and she walked us back out to the dirt road, I put myself between him and her and in a moment when nobody could see us, I turned to her and gave her money for a taxi to the hospital. She knew exactly what I was referring to when I pointed to her arm (though I cannot say what she did with the money). Later, I asked a friend (himself a Tutsi returnee with no French skills) to re-translate the interviews this translator had done, and we found many instances when the translator had left out information, changed it, or badgered the woman into saying what he thought I should hear.

The possible reasons for such behavior at IBUKA include the personality of the translator and his experience as a survivor, or simply bad chemistry between us, but they certainly also include IBUKA's political stance as the umbrella survivors' organization in Rwanda.<sup>15</sup> In particular, the point was repeatedly made to me by IBUKA personnel that there were "very few," "so few," or "tragically few" Hutu who intervened to save Tutsi. In fact, IBUKA says it has investigated many claims of Hutu rescuers, and has determined many of them to be false, or negated by such Hutu's involvement in other crimes (such as rape or theft).<sup>16</sup> While there are undoubtedly many such claims made in the illest of faith, almost every single Tutsi survivor I interviewed mentioned at least one Hutu or Hutu family who had helped them survive.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For a critique of IBUKA's alienating (to Hutu) political stance, see Rombouts (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Data from interviews with IBUKA personnel, December 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>17</sup> In some cases, Hutu were too scared to do more than warn the families that were hiding Tutsi that searches were imminent, or to direct Tutsi to homes where they would hide them.

Eventually, I used different translators for different kinds of work. As the project expanded to include men, I brought on male translators that I trusted, including one Hutu man who I used to speak to other Hutu (one of them a woman the IBUKA translator had badgered). This also allowed me to find a comfortable match of religiosity for the religious programs, to choose language skills as appropriate, and to choose the experience category that made the most sense for that particular situation. However, as previously noted, this introduced some inconsistency in the translation.

### *Documents and other Textual Materials*

A wide variety of documentation was collected for each organization, including textual information found through brochures, reports, books, websites, and even a Facebook page for one organization. And, although this study was not designed to emphasize the analysis of photographic and videographic data, these materials were often offered by the organization leaders or participants, and many requests were made of me to take photographs and/or shoot video (although my capacity for the latter was quite limited).<sup>18</sup> However, there was great variability among the organizations in their level of documentation. Internal documentation was extensive for some, but almost non-existent (or inaccessible) for others. Materials for public circulation were quite well developed in some cases, but not others. Websites were already in place for two organizations, but not for the rest. Some organizations produced materials in multiple languages, and others did not. I collected what documentation I could on all the organizations, and came to accept that it was impossible to collect similar levels of documentary data across organizations. What I did gather was used to complement the evidence gathered through interviews and observations, and to triangulate these sources to render more reliable analysis (Yin, 2003;

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<sup>18</sup> I do not perform visual analysis of these materials for this study, but they have served to refresh my memory of the physical setting and the activities recorded.

Patton, 2002). See the table provided for each organization in the case reports in Chapter Five.

I also collected a considerable amount of data on the Rwandan context, including governmental and non-governmental agency reports; magazines, newspapers, and journals; locally published books and articles; brochures for genocide memorials; guidebooks and tourist materials; a fairly extensive atlas on Rwanda's history, climate, industries, etc; and even t-shirts with political slogans and emblems. Although I gathered whatever seemed intriguing and informative for the background of the study, I prioritized documents that referred to reconciliation and reconstruction; women and gender; religious processes and groups; representations of Rwanda history; and socio-political dynamics and events, in the country, in the region, and within the international community. In particular, I sought places where the discourses about Rwanda's past, present and future, and especially its nationwide process of reconciliation, were portrayed in either favorable or unfavorable terms. Due to my presence in Rwanda during several key events between 2006 and 2009, I was able to view public responses to political events in a way I would never have known to investigate otherwise.<sup>19</sup> This included journal articles, radio commentaries, flyers, and even mass-circulation cell phone messages. All of this data served to shape interpretations of how organizations operate within this context, and what is the larger framework of reconciliation in Rwanda.

#### Data Management in the Field

I collected a sizable amount of data for this study and developed several ways of managing it in the field. For the documentation I had collected about the context

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<sup>19</sup> These include the arrest of Rose Kabuye (mentioned previously) and the attendant calls for "civil demonstrations" made by the government; a renewed invasion into the DRC by Rwanda (this time with an invitation); the release of Brugiere's report on the culpability of the RPF for the assassination of Habyarimana; the establishment of an "independent" government commission investigating France's role in the genocide; the election of Barack Obama; elections leading to a 56% majority of women in the Parliament; the decision to switch to English as the language of instruction in primary schools.

(including governmental and non-governmental reports, journals and magazines, and so on), I reviewed them often from the moment I obtained them, made observations about them in my fieldwork journals, and filed them away in a suitcase set aside for my raw data. The documentation I collected from the different organizations was treated in a very similar fashion, given that it was not normally confidential. I usually reviewed that documentation right away or on the evening it was given to me, made notes accordingly (noting action items, follow-up items, and pieces of analysis within my fieldnotes) and then filed them away in folders for each specific organization. Even before I had decided on the final six organizations to study in depth, I had collected a set of folders for each organization and had kept track of key characteristics of each in an Excel file on my computer. Although I eliminated programs from study, I did not dispose of any hard copy materials.

Interview data was handled very differently. Initially the audio files were only stored on my digital recorder, which doubles as an mp3 player and had music on it in case I was asked to play a file by an official. This never occurred, but I did not drop the vigilance, keeping the files locked so that they could not be accessed, copied or deleted without a code. As some interviewees began with their names and/or birthdate on their own initiative, the files were treated with complete confidentiality. I kept a separate folder on the digital recorder for each organization's interviews, so that I would not confuse them with each other. Each evening, I downloaded the files into my laptop computer at home, keeping a copy there and another copy on a separate "flash drive." I also regularly backed up all my research files on an external hard drive, which was under lock and key. All data files were password-protected, as was my computer itself. As I accumulated files for each organization, I began an indexing system, whereby I gave each file a name, which was comprised of the file number, initials for the organization, and a number corresponding to where it appeared in the series of interviews for that organization. I also noted the file length, and a description of the content. I cross-



indexed this file number with any others related to it (such as the fieldnotes that accompanied that interview and, later, the transcription that corresponded to it). I often listened to interviews in the evenings, to take preliminary notes about what themes, questions, and issues arose, and also to prepare for the next round of interviews. Notes about these were usually jotted down in my fieldwork journals. I did not perform full transcriptions until I returned to the US.

My fieldwork journals were both the most sensitive items and the most exposed. I took notes in all kinds of settings, so I was keenly aware of the importance of their safety. For that reason, I chose smaller journals so that the entirety of my research would not be in one place at one time. I used some symbols from shorthand, and other abbreviations for things that are idiosyncratic to my own writing style. In the evenings, I usually reflected back on the notes for that day, and made more notes in the margins. I almost always wrote more thoughts in an electronic journal about the day, but in a more freeform style which reflected my ongoing thought process. In my guesthouse room (which was later a room in a private house), I always kept one of my suitcases locked, and within it all my research materials. I stayed in very trustworthy places where I had solid friendships with the staff, and never had any reason to believe my data had been accessed by anyone other than myself. Even if it had, as mentioned, the most vulnerable storage places were electronic files that were locked.

### Data Analysis

Recognizing that data analysis is occurring from the moment decisions are made about research strategy (Eisenhardt, 2002), this section describes the data management and analysis techniques and strategies employed after leaving the field. First, after consolidating my impressions from each trip and debriefing those impressions with committee members, I began the long and arduous process of transcription. I first began with my fieldwork journals, bringing the rest of the handwritten material into electronic

form so that I could later code it with data analysis software (Atlas-ti). I also extracted some pieces from my personal journals to help me track the reflexive process throughout this project. Knowing that I was going to have to bring together content from more than one journal into a case file for each specific organization, I assigned a color of ink to each handwritten journal's corresponding electronic notes, so that I could return easily to the raw form of the journal if needed. Then, once armed with multiple colored-ink files for each journal, I set about parsing them up into files corresponding to each of the organizations, as well as to files with notes on context, methods, reflexivity, and theoretical observations. This was so that I could collect all observations or interview content for each of these areas when it came time to work on that part of the dissertation. As might be expected, many entries went into multiple places. The outcome of all this was a document for each of the organizations and one for each of the content areas just mentioned. Each document was in multiple colors corresponding to the original fieldwork journals, and all entries were in chronological order. These were then prepared to upload to Atlas-ti for coding.

The interviews were translated and transcribed during the same period, although they were harder to do and took much longer. Initially, I sought transcription assistance, but dropped it for financial reasons and because using American (or even African) transcribers led to a high error rate and energy expended correcting errors. This difficulty was partially due to the use of several languages (English, French, *Kinyarwanda*, and Swahili) within and across interviews. It was also partially due to the fact that I was doing full transcriptions, complete with conventions for pauses, interruptions, audible sounds from the interviewee, audible sounds from the surroundings, recollections of the moment (from my notes) and descriptions of what was happening at the time. I was also

very specific about languages used, even for one or two word phrases.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, transcribing them myself made me much more intimate with the data, and created many more opportunities for reflection and insight.

As I transcribed each interview, I linked each document to its original and to the fieldnotes corresponding to it (through the simple indexing system mentioned above), and filed them in electronic folder for that organization by type. (Although audio files were kept separately, they had the same file number with a different extension.) Each transcription was headed with the date, location, interviewee, translator, languages used, and special issues encountered during the interview.

The journals, videos, photographs, and documentation I collected were sometimes converted into codable text by transcribing segments I decided were relevant and useful for analysis, and then uploading them directly into Atlas-ti. My Atlas-ti folder has “hermeneutic units” for each of the four organizations I analyzed, plus one for each of the content areas. This is akin to an electronic case folder which can be manipulated in many ways. I also have a back-up of all this material on my external hard drive and flash disk. For easier viewing (and to integrate hard copy materials for later work), I printed up all files, put them in a binder, and boxed them with all the hard copy materials for that program.

Using Atlas-ti to code each case’s material into topic areas (for example, program origins and history, founders, leaders, program activities, approach, quantitative impacts, and qualitative impacts), I broke these down further as needed. For example qualitative impacts eventually became discernible as different themes or categories that had been derived from previous theory (e.g., “mutual empathy”), from my developing theory (e.g., “spiritual empowerment”) or simply from the words Rwandans used (e.g., “wounded

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<sup>20</sup> While I considered using a Rwandan based in the US for transcription (knowing the peculiarities of Rwandan expression would not pose a challenge), I ultimately decided that doing so would violate the confidentiality I had worked so hard to maintain.

healers”). This was therefore both inductive and deductive analysis, although as I got closer to the end, deductive analysis served to check on the authenticity of the inductive analysis (Patton, 2002). As I developed codes from one or more interviews, I would sometimes discover the code was too broad or too narrow. Atlas-ti allows the analyst to rename a theme, split the code up, or merge it with another. Taking each case one by one, I then created a case report by pulling together all the data I determined was most relevant and integrating it into a “comprehensive primary resource package” (Patton, 2002, 449-450) where redundancies and inconsistencies were sorted out to the best of my ability. I was fortunate in that for each of the final four organizations in this study, I was in contact with one or more senior people from that organization, either here in the US or in Rwanda. This allowed me to ask questions to fill gaps I had been unaware of before, and to perform final member checks (although two of these are still in process).

In moving from the first case report (PCR) to the second (AEE), I found that the emerging codes for AEE called into question the conceptual level at which the PCR codes had been developed. So, for example, the developing concept (and even code) for “spiritual surrender” took place somewhere between my completion of the PCR case report and the middle of the analysis for AEE. Going back to PCR, I was able to see commonalities in themes I had for PCR that made comparison with AEE more productive. So, in this fashion I performed “repetitive, ongoing review of accumulated information in order to identify recurrent patterns [and] themes” (Hancock & Algozinnie, 2006, p. 61), first within each case, and then later between cases, bringing some consistency in the level of analysis to the four cases as shown in Chapter Five. This is classic “pattern-matching” technique in Yin’s (2006) typology.

For Cross-Case analysis (Chapter Six), I used a couple of tactics suggested by Eisenhardt (2002, p. 18-19), including “forced comparisons,” i.e., trying to find differences between cases I see as similar (AEE and PCR) and similarities in cases I see as different (e.g., AEE and Duhozanye). For example, in performing the latter

comparison, I realized that the prevalence of rape among the women of Duhozanye may explain some of my findings about that organization.

Taking tentative themes and concepts and systematically applying them to each of the cases allowed me to shape my developing hypotheses, and refine the constructs (e.g. from empowerment to spiritual empowerment), in a manner Eisenhardt (2002) argues is building construct validity through the analysis process (rather than before the data is collected). Then, in “enfolding the literature,” (Eisenhardt, 2002, p. 24-25), I was able to see that the discernments I was making were meaningful within the reconciliation and transformational learning literature(s), but also to see ways in which new relationships could be discerned (e.g. “attending to the past” and “attending to the future”). In reality, these processes were all going on at the same time.

#### Trustworthiness of Study

As a qualitative study based on the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, the methods employed to assure the trustworthiness of this study are based on the qualitative indicators developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989). A hallmark of the qualitative approach is “triangulation,” i.e. the usage of multiple data sources and methods in order to “approach [the] research questions from different angles and to explore [the] intellectual puzzles in a rounded and multi-faceted way” (Mason, 2002, p. 190). I share Mason’s concern that triangulation misleads researchers into thinking that they have arrived at one “knowable objective social reality” (p. 190), and emphasize instead the importance of creating a meaningful illustration rather than a proof (Wolcott, 2001) of what I have seen in Rwanda. Guba and Lincoln (1989) have developed four criteria to assess trustworthiness of a qualitative study, including: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability.

The criterion of “credibility” asks the question of how well the interpretations I have drawn match the data shown in the study. Methods to assure the study has drawn

credible interpretations and conclusions include: prolonged engagement; persistent observation; peer debriefing; negative case analyses; progressive subjectivity; and member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; p. 237-238). I have been engaged with issues related to Rwanda for over 20 years, and the entirety of my fieldwork lasted for just over a year. But by no means do I claim my standpoint grants me epistemological privilege (Mason, 2002). Quite to the contrary, I can only say that I've been in the field for a long time, but it's never long enough (Wolcott, 2001). Rwanda has done nothing if not keep me continually humble about what I "know" and what can be known. In my searching and confusion over the topics of reconciliation and forgiveness in many contexts, but most specifically Rwanda's, I have continually debriefed with peers and advisors, learning from their insights, arguments, and concerns. Some have read my work; others have stayed up late at night giving me feedback on my thoughts and experiences. Among my Rwandan peers and colleagues (key informants, translators, friends, and co-workers), I have been careful not to rely on any one person's standpoint. This was to avoid the errors inherent in "respondent validation" (Mason, 2002), but also to keep my in-field presence as unaligned as possible. Thus, I have benefited greatly from the perspectives of both moderates and "extremists" from virtually every "side" of the Rwandan debate. Playing the "believing game" (Belenky et al, 1986) with them all, as an epistemological orientation *and* a research strategy, has challenged me to find consonance between their ideas and mine.<sup>21</sup>

Another key source of "peer debriefing" was through the literature on Rwanda, and in follow-up conversations with other scholars who also wrestle to reconcile with what has happened and *is happening* in Rwanda. I have continually benchmarked my

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<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless in certain areas I am no doubt blind to the value of certain arguments because of my own biases. With Rwanda, my biases are not about Hutu/Tutsi, northerner/southerner, Christian/Muslim, or even perpetrator/victim. As mentioned in the section above entitled *Reflexive Observations*, my "Forgiveness-Accountability I" disposes me towards people who will take responsibility for their actions, and against those who won't. Those who continually place blame elsewhere for their actions, or deny actions against the "other," whether Hutu or Tutsi, do not get as open an ear from me.

interpretations against theirs. As the study progressed, I also checked the interpretations I was making with the leaders of the organizations (“member checks”), though it cannot be said that I shared *all* of what I was thinking.<sup>22</sup> When I suspected data had been lost or withheld (e.g. with the translator from IBUKA) I arranged to have the data reviewed by another peer. In one case of politically distorted translation, I returned to re-interview a woman with a friendlier translator. Finally, to further enhance the credibility of the study, I “enfolded the literature” in the data analysis stage, and performed certain types of analysis, such as “forced comparisons” (Eisenhardt, 2002, p. 18-19) that generated rival conclusions I could test (Patton, 2002).

The “transferability” of the study (corresponding to “generalizability” or “external validity” in the quantitative literature) has been enhanced by providing as rich a description as possible of each case, and by contextualizing each case within the broader spectrum of programs in Rwanda. From the initial assessment of the extent to which organizations were dependent or aligned with the government, to reviewing all possible data sources about the organization in the data analysis phase, I continually applied effort to understanding how the case “fit” within the larger context. As the context (i.e. Rwanda) is unique in so many ways, the transferability of this study to contexts other than Rwanda’s was closely analyzed in the last phase of data analysis (and is presented in Chapter Seven).

The dependability of the study has been assured through transparency in my methods. Because qualitative approaches “are intended to allow researchers to follow a suitable course of inquiry rather than to dictate in advance what that course should be,” (Wolcott, 2001, p. 160), what is important is being able to trace the route by which I

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<sup>22</sup> Although I never lied, I sometimes did withhold parts of my truth. For example, I knew that sharing my concerns about certain evangelists’ messages about the “saved” vs the “condemned” would shut down communication with one organization, when in fact I was trying hard to understand their approach. As time passed, I was more able to understand their broader orientation, so could express my concern about that message.

came to my interpretations (Mason, 2002, p. 191). Reflective journals allowed me to track my internal processes vis-a-vis my research, while extensive fieldwork journals allowed me to track every subtle change in how I was thinking about my research topic and where my attention was shifting next. Added to these “audit trails” are the innumerable emails, letters, rough versions of papers, and proposals that reflect my approaches and thinking at the time. Keeping all these sources in files and reviewing them again in my data analysis phase allowed me to track what had changed over time and why. Choosing what to relate to the reader in this work was another demanding step in transparency, for without a doubt there is much that remains hidden from view (from both me and the reader). The final test of the dependability of a study is whether another researcher conducting the project in the same way would arrive at the same results. But as Merriam says, (1998, p. 206) notes, “rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense.” This returns one to the criterion of internal validity.

Lastly, the criterion of confirmability means that the reader can be reasonably confident that the interpretations drawn reflect the original source(s), rather than simply the interpretations of the researcher. All researchers, whether quantitative or qualitative, have ideas in their mind of what to look for, or what is to count as relevant to the inquiry (Wolcott, 2001, p. 163-164). The important thing is to keep assumptions as explicit as possible and to use them to enhance the meaning and focus of the study (Wolcott, 2001). In that way, both researcher and reader can assess for themselves the degree to which the results of the study reflect the good and bad biases (like good and bad air) of the researcher (p. 165). One strategy is to provide many examples of study participants in their own words, as I have provided in Chapter Five. Another is to employ reflexive strategies; as described previously, I keep extensive reflective journals and have wrestled deeply with my own biases in regards to Rwandan events. For example, I certainly have preconceived notions about forgiveness and reconciliation, and especially the role of



accountability in reconciliation. However, far from detracting from this study, my sensitivity to accountability is what drew me to the evangelical programs in this study, despite my opposing bias against religious dogma. In being attracted by the former, I was able to see the latter more clearly. Another researcher could never have approached this project in the same way, and to this qualitative researcher, that is exactly what makes it most authentic.

### Limitations of Study

As a qualitative case study of four organizations in Rwanda, this study has particular limitations. I was not able to reliably access very small (*umudugudu*-level) organizations that might engage their members in more boundary-crossing discourse, so when I did find organizations that crossed boundaries, they were distinctively Christian. Nevertheless, the emphasis on Christian programs in this study is a unique contribution to understanding reconciliation in Rwanda. Despite the presence of Hutu in all four organizations, a very significant part of the population (Hutu victims of RPF atrocities) is not represented in any of the four organizations, and therefore I had to seek them through other avenues. Although I was successful in my efforts, no Hutu victim I found was in a program promoting reconciliation, and therefore their observations say much more about the damaging impact of exclusion than anything else.

From a research perspective, additional limitations are that the data was largely retrospective, and was collected in a narrow slice of time from 12 to 14 years after the genocide of 1994. Memories shift over time, and context shapes memory in untraceable ways (Hatzfeld, 2007). Events occurring during that slice of time (e.g., the end phases of the *gacaca*; accusations and counter-accusations between Rwanda and France; renewed war in the DRC; and other events) would have certainly had some effect on people's reflections at the time.

Finally, as a study with only one researcher, it is also a study with only one "data

collection instrument.” I bring my own subjectivity to the research, and all data is filtered through that. Although I have tried to maximize transparency and reflexivity, and I have triangulated methods to the best of my ability, I have also been overwhelmed by information and in my effort to make meaning of what I have seen (my “Meaning-making I”), I have most assuredly let many salient things drop from view, while making less salient things more important than they are. But even then, what is “salient” is always a subjective determination.

#### Chronology of Research Activities

Because this was such a complex study, which underwent several key changes to its structure, the Gantt chart in Table 4.3 shows the chronology of research activities for easy reference. Table 4.3 can be found on the next page.

**Table 4.3 Chronology of Research Activities**



## CHAPTER FIVE: WITHIN CASE FINDINGS

This chapter provides case reports for each of the four organizations at the center of this study.<sup>1</sup> Each organization differs somewhat from the others in regards to the means for gaining field access and the decision to include it in the study; the approaches and activities of the organization; the data available and how it was gathered; and the themes that were derived from analysis of the data. Therefore each case report follows a distinct format, although a consistent progression of discussion across the reports remains, including: brief introduction to the organization; field access and applications of methods peculiar to the case; origins and leadership; mission, vision, values and goals (as applicable); programmatic approach and program activities (in order appropriate to the case); findings derived from data analysis; political considerations; and a short summary statement about the case. As all four organizations enjoy favorable relations with the government of Rwanda, there was no perceived need to obscure details about their leadership or operations. However, certain details are omitted because they may be politically sensitive for the speaker or researcher, and the names of all program participants and local leaders have been changed.<sup>2</sup>

### Case Report: Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation

The Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR) is a “nonprofit, nondenominational frontline ministry, founded by The Rev. Dr. Arthur A. Rouner, Jr.” The core of PCR’s work is a retreat model that “fosters healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation” in several East African countries, including Rwanda.<sup>3</sup> PCR initially worked with church leaders who have experienced genocide

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<sup>1</sup> The term “organization” refers to all four of the entities under study, even though the women’s organizations refer to themselves as “associations.” “Program” is used somewhat interchangeably with “organization,” although generally refers to the specific parts of an organization’s programming.

<sup>2</sup> In no case did organization leaders or interviewees express a desire to remain anonymous, although the option was always offered.

<sup>3</sup> Other countries include Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, and Tanzania. See PCR’s Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Pilgrim-Center-for-Reconciliation/165764443792> (Last accessed on January 10, 2011). PCR programs have also been run with some groups in the US, including: members of Ethiopian diaspora; adult leaders of an inner-city Minneapolis school named Hope Academy; refugee groups; and a church wrestling with internal conflict (data from phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011).

and/or war, but has also served government, military and civil society leaders in such contexts. This case report first describes field access and application of methods at PCR. It then discusses PCR's origins and leadership; mission, vision, values and goals; programmatic approach; key program activities (with an emphasis on healing and reconciliation retreats); findings from data analysis; and political considerations. The case report ends with a short summary statement about PCR.

### *Field Access and Application of Methods (PCR)*

I first met the American founder(s) of PCR, the Reverend Dr. Arthur A. Rouner, Jr. and his wife Molly, through a rather serendipitous meeting in Minneapolis in late 2006.<sup>4</sup> After hearing more about PCR's work in Rwanda, and sharing a bit about my history in the region and my upcoming research, Arthur and Molly encouraged me to meet Peter (the Rwanda Team Leader of PCR) when I traveled to Rwanda in 2007.<sup>5</sup> That summer I attended services at Peter's church in Kigali and, at his behest, two PCR retreats.<sup>6</sup> I took notes continually at both the church services and the retreats because there was quite a bit of language regarding reconciliation that was intriguing on multiple levels. However, I did not intend to include PCR in my study because I was still focused only on women's groups in the summer of 2007.<sup>7</sup> I was at a PCR retreat in Cyangugu (on the border with Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC]) when I was called back to the United States for a family tragedy. I was therefore the recipient of a very intense prayer session for the healing of my family, which was given on the part of retreat participants.

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<sup>4</sup> I was in Minneapolis at the time visiting my ailing father, and was searching online using the terms "Rwanda" and "reconciliation." The very first site in the search results was for the Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (an indicator of where the literature on Rwandan reconciliation was at the time). Realizing that PCR was located in Edina, MN, the very town where my father lived, I contacted PCR to arrange a meeting. My husband and I had a very warm and inspiring lunch meeting with Arthur and Molly Rouner and a PCR staff person.

<sup>5</sup> "Peter" is a pseudonym, as are all names given for PCR participants or national leaders. It is very common for Rwandans to have a Christian name as well as a personal name in *Kinyarwanda*.

<sup>6</sup> Peter's church is one of the many "free" churches in Rwanda that are led by Tutsi returnees from Uganda, as discussed by Van 't Spijker (1999) in Chapter Two.

<sup>7</sup> Although I didn't have the intention to include PCR in my study at the time, multiple people approached me on their own initiative, so I collected some interview data at these early retreats. Quotations from these interviewees were noted in my fieldwork journal.

When I finally decided to include religious reconciliation programs in the fall of 2008 (as discussed in Chapter Four), I began to view PCR more deliberately. I circled back on my notes from previous retreats to follow up with Peter on what I had interpreted. I attended more services at Peter's church, and I observed one more PCR retreat. I interviewed both Rwanda Team leaders (Peter and Patrick), and especially Peter because he became a mainstay of my social and professional life in Rwanda. I held innumerable conversations with Peter while in the car, while sipping tea in a café, in his home, late in the evening after a long retreat day, and even in Minneapolis in late 2007 when he was in the US to raise funds for PCR's work. I interviewed two local PCR leaders and eight participants at the retreat center for the third retreat. As some of them approached me first, participant interviews varied in length from 10-40 minutes.

After the third retreat at PCR, I reviewed my interview data for PCR and I realized that although I had heard from or interviewed a variety of Hutu and Tutsi, some categories of experience were still missing from my data set, most notably Hutu sufferers of Tutsi (particularly RPF) crimes. I delicately asked Peter to arrange another set of interviews to also include "Hutu who had suffered."<sup>8</sup> He willingly did so, working through a local PCR leader, who brought himself and five other former retreat participants to be interviewed individually at a restaurant in Kigali in January of 2009.<sup>9</sup> I interviewed each of these six people for more than an hour each, and shared introductory and closing conversations, as well as lunch, with the whole group. Although this set of interviews was of very high quality, there was still no Hutu who had suffered Tutsi crimes (beyond the theft of property) among them.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the only non-perpetrator Hutu among them was a woman "rescuer" who had actually never attended a PCR retreat.

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<sup>8</sup> I did not ask Peter directly for Hutu victims of RPF crimes because at the time I felt he understood my intent and that we were both speaking indirectly of sensitive political matters.

<sup>9</sup> Because participants of PCR retreats often attend multiple retreats, or join retreats for the final celebration, the interviews I conducted at retreats were with both current retreat participants and returning participants, while those in Kigali were interviewed outside a retreat context.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, no participant of a PCR retreat ever mentioned Tutsi crimes beyond theft of property to me personally or in testimony before the other retreat participants. I only found such persons outside the organizations in this study.

For translation and interpretation, my arrangements varied much more widely at PCR than they did at any other organization I studied. At PCR, translation is normally left to shift from participant to participant (Rouner, 2002), which was perhaps enriching for them and for me, but created quite a bit of inconsistency in translation. When one of the retreat languages was French or Swahili (e.g., along the border with the DRC), I did not use a translator and occasionally had to translate short segments for participants or observers whose translator had stepped out.<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, all the PCR leaders I met were fluent in English, so conversations and interviews with them were relatively straightforward. For the last six interviews I held in Kigali in January of 2009, I hired a very proficient and experienced English speaker (a young member of Peter's church) to translate for me.

Regarding documentary data, PCR in Rwanda did not appear to have a very organized documentation system. This is perhaps a result of the organizational style of the Rwanda Team Leaders, who were both quite experienced retreat leaders but appeared to often be in the position of pulling together last details for retreats.<sup>12</sup> The PCR office in Kigali was nearly empty, and the leaders seemed reluctant to have me poring over what files were there. I did not press the issue. However, documentation on the US side of PCR's operations was more substantial and available. I reviewed multiple bi-monthly newsletters from PCR's Minnesota office; Rouner's (2002) book about PCR's work in Rwanda entitled, *Forgiveness: The Path to Reconciliation*; a PCR promotional video (n.d.) entitled *Lasting Peace*, which documents PCR's retreat approach; PCR's webpage under construction; and all the materials on the PCR Facebook page (including videos and photographs) that have been placed there by visitors and supporters of the PCR

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<sup>11</sup> Depending on location, PCR retreats may be given in only one language or in two, with two leaders standing next to each other and alternating sentences between the two languages. On one occasion, the Secretary for PCR was tasked with taking notes on testimonies for English speaking supporters. Although she spoke English quite well, she could not take notes rapidly. We realized it worked best for her to translate verbally to me while I more quickly wrote the stories down for her in English. Although she promised me a copy of my notes, I never received one. This is a good example of the haphazard nature of translation at PCR.

<sup>12</sup> This impression was confirmed in a phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011.



program.<sup>13</sup> Throughout my fieldwork phases from 2007 to 2009, I regularly conducted informal member checks with Peter, one of the Rwanda Team Leaders. In the summer of 2010, after I had already coded the multiple sources of data and derived preliminary interpretations, I conducted member checks with Arthur Rouner and an American friend of PCR who had attended many retreats. Finally, I conducted one last member check with Rouner in January of 2011, once the case report was reaching completion. A summary of all data sources for PCR is provided in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Sources of Data for Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation**

<b>Interviews with demographic information</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Documents/Video</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 US-based founders (4 times, together and apart): one male, one female, both &gt; 62 y.o.</li> <li>• 2 Rwanda-based Team Leaders (multiple informal): 1 Hutu male, 1 Tutsi male &gt; 62 y.o.</li> <li>• 2 Rwanda-based Local Leaders (single interviews): 1 Tutsi male , 1 Hutu male</li> <li>• 14 participants: 6 Tutsi survivors (2 female, 5 male); 1 Hutu rescuer (female); 2 Hutu perpetrators (male); 4 Hutu (non- perpetrators)</li> <li>• Multiple additional individual testimonies given at retreats</li> <li>• 1 US-based observer of several PCR retreats (multiple informal): male</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 healing and reconciliation retreats</li> <li>• Long transports with leaders to and from retreats</li> <li>• Church services with leaders in Rwanda and US</li> <li>• Many PCR-affiliated social events (weddings, revivals, holy day celebrations)</li> <li>• Peripheral activities, e.g. street children project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletters and brochures</li> <li>• Book by founder</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Facebook page</li> <li>• Photographs</li> <li>• Promotional video</li> </ul>

**Note:** Age of all persons over 62 years of age are indicated with > 62 y.o. to distinguish persons who would have been young adults during critical events of 1959-1962.

<sup>13</sup> PCR's webpage has been sporadically accessible, but appears to be up and partially running as of January 15, 2011 at <http://pilgrimcenter.org/wordpress/about-us/>.

### *Origins and Leadership (PCR)*

PCR was founded in 1994 by Reverend Dr. Arthur A Rouser, Jr., an American parish minister, and prominent leader and author in the Congregational Church (Carson, 2010).<sup>14</sup> With the support and direction of World Vision (WV) headquarters in Seattle, Washington, Rouser first traveled to Rwanda in 1995 to explore how a reconciliation ministry might best respond to the profound needs of the Rwandan population (Rouser, 2002).<sup>15</sup> However, although the WV office in Rwanda was acutely aware of the enormous needs for reconciliation among the Rwandan population, it was at the time occupied (as many organizations in Rwanda were) with finding missing children, providing emergency relief, and a myriad of other services.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, WV wasn't really sure how to go about the work of reconciliation, despite the "people from the West who were already pouring into Rwanda to conduct seminars and workshops on the subject" (Rouser, 2002, p. 4). Eventually, seeing Rwanda's enormous needs for reconciliation ministry, but acknowledging it could not address these needs with current programming, WV created a five-year grant to support Rouser's work, thus providing him both support and freedom to develop the reconciliation ministry in Rwanda and beyond.<sup>17</sup>

Working together with Arthur Rouser were his wife Molly Rouser and an Ethiopian colleague from World Vision named Tekle Selassie, who was with the Rousers for two years (Rouser, 2002). In 1996, the trio moved the reconciliation project further forward, working initially with church leaders through WV contacts at the Evangelical Alliance in Rwanda.

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<sup>14</sup> There is considerable inconsistency in statements of PCR's founding year, which I was unable to get a clear answer on, despite several queries to Rouser. PCR's website states a founding year of 1993, while its Facebook page states a founding year of 1994. Rouser's first trip to Rwanda was in 1995, and the first retreat in Rwanda was in 1997.

<sup>15</sup> World Vision (WV) is a very large Christian humanitarian aid and relief agency operating in nearly 100 countries all over the world, and delivering a wide variety of services to populations in need. See <http://www.worldvision.org>. WV Rwanda has since developed healing and reconciliation retreats, especially the Personal Development Workshop (data from impromptu interview with WV personnel on flight from Nairobi to Kigali, Rwanda in December of 2008; also Steward (2009).

<sup>16</sup> Data from Rouser (2002), confirmed in phone interview with Rouser on January 15, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> In reality, the steps to the creation of the five-year grant were quite a bit more complicated, but beyond the concerns of this work (data from phone interview with Rouser on January 15, 2011).

Increasingly, they heard the frustrations of church leaders who had attended workshops on reconciliation, but came away angry at how they could be expected to promote reconciliation when they themselves were profoundly in need of healing.<sup>18</sup> Through such interactions, the Rouners and Selassie began to see that “the answer, the avenue” was not to be found in “information about” or “explanation of” reconciliation but rather in “*experiences of healing*” (Rouner, 2002, p. 4, emphasis in original). As Rouner writes:

Somehow the method couldn't be preaching. It couldn't be lectures. It wouldn't be for great crowds. It had to be with *individuals*....somehow we were given the idea of a *retreat* that almost took shape as we began to do it. We felt our way along. We knew we had to sit with the people. There would be no chairs lined up row after row, and no offering of expertise (Rouner, 2002, p. 4, emphasis in original).

It is important to note Molly Rouner's role in shaping the PCR approach from this earliest of insights.<sup>19</sup> On her first visit to Rwanda, troubled and doubtful she and her husband could say or do anything of use in Rwanda, Molly had heard a very clear message from God about the humble approach PCR should take: “Go to your knees before them, and ask forgiveness of these people for what your own people of the West did, to divide them from each other” (Rouner, 2002, p. 1). From this message came PCR's emphasis on personal experience, rather than lectures by outside “experts” who had failed Rwandans when they needed it most (Rouner, 2002). Taking this insight and joining it with other deeply held beliefs and insights from early contributors, it was Molly who developed the scriptural background and progression of teachings and experiences that form the “manual” for a PCR retreat.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, believing that healing for Rwanda was in the hands of its religious leadership, but that religious leaders themselves were profoundly in need of personal healing after the genocide,

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<sup>18</sup> Data from Rouner (2002); multiple interviews with Rwanda Team Leaders for PCR in Rwanda (2007-2009); PCR's promotional video, *Lasting Peace*; and from phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Data from Rouner (2002); multiple interviews with Arthur Rouner in Rwanda and the US (2006-2011); and from personal impressions from interactions with Molly Rouner in Rwanda and the US (2006-2009).

<sup>20</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011. In terms of her personal presence, as Arthur Rouner says, “Molly has a unique way of disarming African men...she takes a direct interest in them, helping them to go from one step to the next, breaking down barriers of mistrust.” Indeed, I observed very favorable responses to Molly's warmth and openness among Rwandans (data from fieldnotes, January 2009).

the Rouners and early contributors “felt their way” towards a three-day retreat format that was initially targeted for church leaders who had experienced the trauma of genocide and war.<sup>21</sup> The very first healing and reconciliation retreat run by the Rouners and Selassie brought together twelve pastors through the Evangelical Alliance and was held at the Scripture Union in Kigali in late January of 1997 (Rouner, 2002).<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, PCR’s work was also extended to Burundi, drawing on many of the same partnerships with WV and Evangelical Alliance, but also moving in directions the Rouners otherwise might not have explored (e.g. working with government, military, and police forces).<sup>23</sup>

Over time, initially in Burundi and then in Rwanda, Africa Revival Ministries (ARM) showed the greater desire to partner with PCR, and thus played an increasingly strong role in the development of PCR programs.<sup>24</sup> ARM in Burundi had been left to its own devices after the death of three of its young founders in a plane crash, and according to Rouner, “They knew what they needed....They told us, ‘We have been waiting for you.’”<sup>25</sup> In fact, it is from ARM in Rwanda that the two Rwanda Team Leaders of PCR were drawn (Rouner, 2002). Patrick was a “new caseload returnee” (i.e., Hutu) from the DRC, and first became involved with PCR through its relationship with ARM (from 1995 onwards). Peter was an “old caseload returnee” (i.e., Tutsi) from Uganda who returned to Rwanda “on the heels” of the RPF in 1994, concerned that his fellow Tutsi would seek revenge, and “carrying a reconciliation desire and purpose.”<sup>26</sup> He

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<sup>21</sup> Data from Rouner (2002), as confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011. When asked how the retreat format evolved, Rouner replied, “It just kind of happened...it wasn’t an invented process and if people ask us how it happened, it was mysterious how it came about. It was mostly a gift.”

<sup>22</sup> This first retreat is described in Rouner (2002) as “so simple,” but it shaped many of the central features of a PCR retreat today.

<sup>23</sup> Data from Rouner (2002) and confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011. Later on, PCR began offering reconciliation retreats in other countries of the region, including Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania, and the far eastern edge of the DRC. Depending on the locale, PCR partners with a variety of local organizations to access populations in need (data from Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Pilgrim-Center-for-Reconciliation/165764443792>, last accessed on January 10, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Data from Rouner (2002) and confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Data from interview with Peter in Kigali, Rwanda on July 13, 2007. Confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011. Quotation is from latter interview. Recall from Chapter Two that “old caseload” returnees are

founded one of the new evangelical churches established in the post-genocide period (Van 't Spijker, 1999) in Kigali, and joined ARM, where he worked with Patrick and then joined him at PCR in 1996.<sup>27</sup>

Despite working together in reconciliation ministries at both ARM and PCR, Rwanda Team Leaders Peter and Patrick faced their own challenges in reconciling with each other, a story they shared at all three PCR retreats I attended. In fact, Peter attended the very first retreat PCR gave, but as he says, “I was a good preacher, but in my heart, I still had so much hatred.” It wasn’t until the third retreat that he felt “all those luggages [sic] dropped!”<sup>28</sup> Both Patrick and Peter told me how they tried to appear reconciled with each other during their first couple of years of working together, but they would travel, sleep, and eat separately whenever they could. Over time, they say they have come to deeply reconcile with and love each other, which has carried them through many challenges together.<sup>29</sup> As Rouner describes, PCR has been very fortunate to have such a strong Hutu-Tutsi pairing in both Rwanda and Burundi, as they are frequently asked at retreats, “How can you sleep and eat with him?!”<sup>30</sup> As indicated by the way in which Patrick and Peter share their story at the beginning of retreats, their personal example of overcoming their hatred for each other is part of what makes a PCR retreat really “tick.”<sup>31</sup> Another story of reconciliation PCR leaders tell is that of Rwanda Team Leader Patrick (Hutu), and another local PCR leader named Antoine (Tutsi). They were to lead a retreat in a town Peter did not want to go (as his wife’s entire family had been killed there). Antoine was approached by several Tutsi of the town and offered money to kill Patrick. Later, Antoine admitted that he

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generally Tutsi from neighboring countries who had been in exile for years, sometimes generations. “New caseload” returnees are generally Hutu who fled Rwanda when the Tutsi-led RPF stopped the genocide and gained power in 1994.

<sup>27</sup> Data from multiple sources, including interview with Peter in Kigali, Rwanda on July 13, 2007; phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011; and Rouner (2002).

<sup>28</sup> Data from interview with Peter in Kigali, Rwanda on July 13, 2007, and confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Data from interviews with Peter in Kigali, Rwanda on July 13, 2007; Patrick in Rwamagana, Rwanda on July 24, 2007; and Rouner in a phone interview on January 15, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Data from *Lasting Peace* (n.d.) and interview with Rouner in Minneapolis in late 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011.

did not object to the idea of killing Patrick, but he had declined the offer for fear of getting caught. Antoine told this story to me and another friend of PCR in August 2007, amidst uproarious laughter among the PCR leaders present.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the challenges PCR leaders themselves face in reconciliation, since its founding more than 10,000 people have been reached by PCR programs in the Great Lakes region of Africa (at about 1,000 a year), and 450 facilitators have been trained in the PCR retreat method.<sup>33</sup> Although the Rouners (in their 80s) still spend at least two months a year conducting retreats throughout the Great Lakes region of Africa, the large majority of retreats in Rwanda are led by Team Leaders or local leaders. In Rwanda, there are over 100 such leaders, who come from almost every Christian denomination.<sup>34</sup> Over 3,000 people have attended healing and reconciliation retreats with PCR in Rwanda.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals (PCR)*

PCR has a number of statements on its Facebook page and website (intermittently under construction) that reflect its mission and philosophy, and even its “products,” although only the mission and products are clearly identified as such. The stated mission of PCR is, “to provide healing retreats to help people recover from the trauma, losses, and horrors of genocide, war, conflict, and displacement.” PCR “products” are “transformed, liberated, happy people whose wounded hearts have been healed.”<sup>36</sup> The header for the PCR’s home page on Facebook states:

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<sup>32</sup> Data from fieldnotes, August 7, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> As of January 15, 2011, PCR’s website claimed 10,000 people have been served by PCR (or about 1,000 a year). PCR’s Facebook page states that 450 retreat facilitators have been trained in their retreat method. See PCR’s website at: <http://pilgrimcenter.org/wordpress/about-us/>, and Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Pilgrim-Center-forReconciliation/165764443792?v=info>. Both last accessed on January 10, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Although there are Catholic clergy and laypersons that attend PCR retreats, the Catholic churches are not involved in PCR’s work to the extent that many Protestant churches are (data from interviews with Rwanda Team Leaders in Cyangugu, Rwanda on August 7, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Estimates of numbers served and leaders trained were given to me by the Rwanda Team Leaders in informal conversations in August of 2007.

<sup>36</sup> See <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/PilgrimCenterforReconciliation/165764443792?v=info>, last accessed on January 10, 2010.

No heart is so wounded that it cannot be healed, no life is so damaged that it cannot be restored, no sin is so terrible that it cannot be forgiven -- by Almighty God. We provide healing retreats for hurting people. God does the work.

These simple statements and Rouner's (2002) book, *Forgiveness: The Path to Reconciliation*, provide insight into what appears to motivate and inspire the people at PCR and how they approach their work. One notable gap on PCR's Facebook page, which is clearly articulated in Rouner's book, is that of Christian evangelism and/or revival -- not only in Rwanda but more globally, particularly in the West. PCR's evangelistic focus is described at more length in the following sections.<sup>37</sup>

### *Programmatic Approach (PCR)*

Certain things about PCR's programmatic approach are evident in the preceding discussion of its origins and leadership; and its mission, vision, values and goals. First, PCR is a highly Christian organization, as it was founded by American Christian evangelists in partnership with evangelistic partners in Rwanda and other host countries.<sup>38</sup> Its operation is predicated on the belief that only spiritual (specifically Christian) approaches can truly promote reconciliation, as expressed by Rouner:

So many approaches are secular, which rarely work. [In them] the mediator says put down your complaints, but the hurt continues or returns, so it is all really about conflict *management*. But their fundamental view of each other has not changed. Reconciliation can't be an outgrowth of such an approach, it has to be an outgrowth of forgiveness, and forgiveness takes a profound spiritual change.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Christian evangelism and revival also appeared to be a strong motivation for the Rwandan leaders of PCR, as reflected in their speeches and sermons, but seemed to be more focused on Rwanda or on the Great Lakes region. "Bringing others to Christ" was regularly expressed by PCR retreat leaders and participants as a very positive outcome. It sometimes referred to those who were not Christian previously, but most often referred to those who were Christian but had not fully "surrendered" to Jesus Christ, especially in the aftermath of the genocide. In my observations of PCR, leaders varied in how evangelistic they were. For example, Rouner described to me how he had discouraged one leader from being too "preachy," saying, "These are not services. We're not here to persuade them, it's more of an invitation. We're saying, 'This is here for you.'" Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009) and from interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011; quotation from the latter.

<sup>38</sup> An interesting indication of how Christians articulate their faith was the way retreat participants often (especially at the retreat on the border with the DRC) introduced themselves with their name and the statement, "I have only one wife." This was presumably to distinguish themselves from polygamists in the DRC (some of whom claim to be Christian).

<sup>39</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner, January 11, 2011.

Because so many church leaders either participated in or suffered profoundly from the genocide, PCR's efforts were initially targeted to the healing of church leaders, including pastors but also women and youth leaders.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, built into every step of a PCR retreat is a specific set of biblical passages used in key teachings, personal reflections, and retreat activities, thus "resorting to the very source and authority they knew best" (Rouner, 2002). Indeed, at the three retreats I observed (and in many church services I attended), it was apparent that the biblical passages chosen were typically quite well known by the participants, as nearly every one followed the teaching closely in their own copy of the Bible (generally in *Kinyarwanda*). The PCR approach is also imbued with a belief in the power of prayer, and a retreat entails many occasions for prayer -- both contemplative personal prayer and a much more expressive communal form of prayer, frequently blended with song and dance.<sup>41</sup>

Second, consistent with the Christian approach, PCR retreats are very focused on a personal and psychological process of reconciliation, as was confirmed to me in interviews with Rouner.<sup>42</sup> This focus is reflected in the question and answer posed on PCR's Facebook page: "How do you bring reconciliation and healing to *countries* devastated by genocide and war? One *person* at a time?" (emphasis added). The reconciliation and healing of countries is thus seen as occurring first on the individual level.<sup>43</sup> The Facebook page for PCR then asks, "What causes a person the greatest emotional, physical, and spiritual harm?" The answer: "Unforgiveness. We help people forgive."<sup>44</sup> As described at more length in the section *Program Activities* below, in a

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<sup>40</sup> PCR has broadened its approach to include government, military and civil society leaders; child soldiers; and women. Its current area of growing focus in Rwanda is on young adults who witnessed the genocide as children (Rosenblum, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Data from Rouner (2002) and from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>42</sup> Data from interview with Rouner in Minneapolis (2006) and in later phone interview (January 11, 2011), as also confirmed in Rouner (2002).

<sup>43</sup> PCR's focus on personal healing is also reflected in the founders' decision (described previously) to hold retreats for small groups of individuals rather than "great crowds" (Rouner, 2002, p. 4).

<sup>44</sup> These two questions with accompanying answers were on the header of the PCR Facebook page as late as August, 2010. However, the header has since been changed. See: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/PilgrimCenterforReconciliation/165764443792?v=info>, last accessed on January 10, 2010.



PCR retreat unforgiveness is presented as a set of wounds or burdens on the heart that only forgiveness can heal or remove. Thus, in addition to being a spiritual and specifically Christian process, reconciliation at PCR is seen as both personal and psychological.

Third, the PCR retreat model is very experiential, oriented towards the “*experience of healing*” (emphasis in original) rather than information about or explanations of reconciliation (Rouner, 2002, p. 4). The Rouners intentionally avoided using lectures or models to help Rwandans “make sense” of genocide and reconciliation, hearing instead their calling from God to simply come alongside Rwandans in their suffering (Rouner, 2002). Retreats entail a number of physically enacted ceremonies and rituals to promote a deeply felt sense of healing, rather than intellectual engagement with ideas around reconciliation and forgiveness.<sup>45</sup> The Rwandan pastors who helped PCR shape the first retreats confirmed the wisdom of the experiential approach, noting that they had attended many seminars and trainings that culminated in “many notes in books we can't remember” but very little in the way of actual healing.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, a PCR retreat is intentionally designed to reduce the appearance of leadership hierarchies. Participants sit in a large circle (rather than rows) and retreat leaders are constantly changing speaking roles and positions within the circle. Rouner describes how he and Molly work with local leaders at retreats:

Africans are always watching, especially how we treat them and how we treat our colleagues. We don't follow up on what our colleagues say the way others do, to make sure they got it right.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, The PCR approach explicitly promotes empathetic engagement with the suffering of self and others. This orientation began with the Rouners themselves, as Molly Rouner describes in the PCR video *Lasting Peace* (n.d.):

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<sup>45</sup> Data from interview with Rouner (2006), as confirmed in field data (2007-2009) and in data from interviews with Rwanda Team Leaders (2007-2009) and with Rouner on January 15, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Data from interview with Rwanda Team Leader Patrick in Kigali, Rwanda on July 24, 2007.

<sup>47</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 15, 2011.

A lot of the people from the outside who were wanting to help in reconciliation were saying this is what you do - a, b, c, d - and there was a lot of resentment built up against that because people said you don't know what I experienced, what are you doing here, what do *you* know about what we went through, what do you *know*? So, we admitted that up front, we don't know your pain, but we are confident that Jesus knows your pain. So, we want to come and help to provide a space for you to be with Jesus, where you can have that conversation about what happened.

Rwanda Team Leader Patrick also spoke to me of the importance of the Rouners simply coming to Rwanda to “sit down and cry with those who are crying, and suffer with those who are suffering.”<sup>48</sup> PCR retreats entail a deliberate progression of activities to first bring a participant into contact with his own suffering, and to then bring him or her into contact with the suffering of “the other.”<sup>49</sup> Making contact with such suffering is not primarily cognitive, but affective, as is shown in the description of a three-day PCR retreat in the next section.

### *Program Activities (PCR)*

PCR is associated with many projects aside from healing and reconciliation retreats, such as orphan and widow support, skills training for youth, shelters for street children, and so on. However, these are projects the leaders of PCR are involved with outside of PCR activities, so are not discussed here. The primary activity of PCR is its standard healing and reconciliation retreat, and therefore the discussion here will focus on the retreat, including recruitment of participants and retreat format.

### *Recruitment of PCR Participants*

PCR retreats normally have from twelve to twenty participants, and at least two leaders. Typically the Rwanda Team Leaders and local leaders of PCR recruit participants for the retreats, although the Rouners are involved in the overall direction of PCR's outreach, and therefore the composition of retreat populations (especially for the retreats they personally

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<sup>48</sup> This was also an expression used by Patrick in the PCR video *Lasting Peace* (n.d.).

<sup>49</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner, on January 11, 2011. Recall from Chapter Two that the “other” in Rwanda may not only be Hutu or Tutsi, but might be a person from a different experience category, a different region (as with intra-Hutu divisions), or within local communities or churches.

lead).<sup>50</sup> Participants are recruited through local churches and networks across the country, in order to increase the reach of PCR's ministry, and to reduce the risks of undue "exposure." For example, PCR avoids working with any one specific church or entity, so that all participants may explore forgiveness freely without pressure or consequence. For this reason, participants usually do not know many or any others at the retreat, unless it is a specialized program such as a rebel military group meeting with government leaders (as with a set of retreats in Burundi).<sup>51</sup> Because they are recruited through localized networks, participants are normally invited or encouraged by a previous PCR participant or a PCR leader to attend a retreat. The extent to which such recruitments are "voluntary" was not discernible to me.

### *Retreat Format*

PCR retreats are not all exactly alike, but there is a set format within which adaptations for the setting and population do occur.<sup>52</sup> The three PCR retreats I observed were consistent in their progression of activities, although there was some variation in the order of teachings and the biblical passages emphasized for each teaching. Because PCR retreats continue to the present day and their format is somewhat standard, much of the following description is given in the present tense. Specific observations from the fieldwork phase of this study are given in the past tense to reflect the fact that some variation does occur, and three retreats cannot be taken to represent the hundreds of PCR retreats that have occurred in Rwanda.

A PCR retreat typically occurs over three days, and in keeping with the spirit of a "retreat," participants normally spend three days together in a location (such as a church-based educational center or Christian university), where meals are served and individuals are housed in separate rooms or dormitories. The daily activity of a retreat includes a significant amount of

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<sup>50</sup> Interviews with Rouner (2006-2011) and Rwanda Team Leaders (2007-2009), and from fieldnotes of retreat planning conversations (2007-2009).

<sup>51</sup> Data from interviews with Rouner (2006-2011) and Rwanda Team Leaders (2007-2009).

<sup>52</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009), confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011. Recall from foregoing discussion that Molly Rouner developed the scriptural background and progression of a retreat to reflect the many ideas of early contributors to PCR's approach.

Bible study beginning in the early morning, with a long midday break, and continuing up until dinner time. Preparation for the next day's activity occupies some time each evening and includes some passage from Scripture. Apart from the formal activities of a retreat, participants take meals together and have various opportunities for informal interaction, prayer, and discussion.<sup>53</sup> Throughout the retreat sessions and at meals, dancing and singing of familiar songs is initiated either by leaders or by retreat participants.<sup>54</sup> These appear at times to be spontaneous and at others planned to coincide with the beginning of a session (to draw latecomers in), with the end of a session (to close it out), or at any other important or celebratory moment in a teaching.

*Day one.* PCR retreats start at a very deliberate pace. Participants do not yet know each other well and their mood is generally cautious and reserved.<sup>55</sup> At the retreats I attended, all participants were dressed in their "Sunday best" and seated in a circle, but on the morning of the first day, there was very little interaction between them. Conversation in the room was minimal, expressions were inscrutable, and even when I tried to make eye contact (e.g. with the sole woman at an otherwise male retreat), remarkably little of it was returned to me.<sup>56</sup> Most of the first morning's activity in a PCR retreat consists of the retreat leaders giving teachings on particular passages from Scripture that relate to the tone and atmosphere of a PCR retreat. When all participants speak one language, leaders trade on and off on teachings, stepping into the center of the circle while speaking and sometimes moving about the circle to address particular people.<sup>57</sup> When there are multiple languages present, retreat leaders speak simultaneously, back and forth sentence by sentence, standing right next to each other and moving about inside the

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<sup>53</sup> Participants do receive a small stipend (10,000 FRw or about \$20) for their attendance, which is expected in Rwanda and helps to cover their travel expenses.

<sup>54</sup> Even where a retreat occurred across national and linguistic boundaries (e.g. Cyanguu, along Rwanda's border with DRC), it appeared that no participant was unfamiliar with any song sung at the retreat.

<sup>55</sup> Data from interviews with Rouners (2006-2011), Rwanda Team Leaders (2007-2009) and from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>56</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>57</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

circle, as if one were the “lead” in a dance.<sup>58</sup>

The first set of teachings at a PCR retreat is always about being with or journeying with Jesus, specifically the invitation of Jesus to his disciples to “come apart and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).<sup>59</sup> In PCR’s teaching around this passage, Jesus is not presented as an abstract, ideological presence, but as a personal and compassionate presence. Rouner describes the importance of this message:

There is no theological conception of “rest” in the African church. No vacations, no days off, no time to take care of one’s own needs. There’s a lot of guilt around that. Many [pastors] are never paid for their work, though they work incredible hours attending to their congregations. Yet, they are afraid to ask for money. So, the idea of *rest* is a very big surprise to them. It disarms them from suspicion of each other, and of us.<sup>60</sup>

In each of the three retreats I observed, this initial teaching was approached in several ways over a couple of hours.<sup>61</sup> As time passed, I noticed more participants set down their pens from their notebooks to begin to look at the leaders or at each other, and I heard more expressions of “eeeh!” and “mm-mm-hmm!” coming from participants.<sup>62</sup> As some of them later expressed in interviews with me, this invitation to “come apart and rest a while” was the first time they had ever been invited to simply *rest*, and it was quite a surprising invitation, overwhelmed as they often were in communities with profound needs.

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<sup>58</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009). As noted in foregoing discussion, translation at PCR varied considerably, as it continually shifted from person to person. Translation for outsiders (such as myself) can be a very powerful experience for a participant, as one interviewee (on August 9, 2007, in Cyangugu, Rwanda) noted, “When I interpreted, I found myself communicating the message of reconciliation to [others], though in my heart I have not reconciled yet....this allowed me to hear the spirit of the message in a new way.”

<sup>59</sup> Data from Rouner (2002), and confirmed in the New International Version (2011) on Bible Gateway: <http://www.biblegateway.com/>, last accessed on April 1, 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Data from Rouner (2002), as confirmed in fieldnotes and interviews with Rwanda Team Leaders (2007-2009) and in phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011 (quotation is from the latter interview).

<sup>61</sup> Scriptural teachings at PCR retreats, and indeed in Rwanda more generally, are usually given in very long, repetitious sessions that I found interminable and “preachy,” but the participants appeared to be very familiar and comfortable with the method of delivery. As Rouner observes, “Repetition in long, boring sessions is difficult for our American visitors. But Africans don’t need a lot of entertainment like Americans do.” Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011.

<sup>62</sup> It is impossible to convey the sound of these expressions in print, but these are typical sounds Rwandans make to indicate they are listening.

The invitation to “come apart and rest awhile” at PCR is then blended into a set of teachings about “wounded healers,” based in the biblical stories of prophets, apostles, and servants, as with the challenges faced by Elijah, Isaiah, and Jonah; in the story of Simon; and especially humanity's fall from harmony and unity with God, which is viewed as the source of the original brokenness of the human spirit.<sup>63</sup> This teaching appears to take longer to unfold, as it is aimed at helping participants to view themselves as “wounded healers.”<sup>64</sup> Retreat leaders regularly draw connections between the struggles of biblical persons and the personal struggles of the participants, whether that be the difficulties of suppressing the desire for revenge, of ministering to congregations full of “the wrong kind of faces” (i.e. Hutu or Tutsi), or of “trying to sow love when one only feels hatred.”<sup>65</sup> Many examples pertaining specifically to the profound difficulties of being Christian leaders (i.e. “healers”) in Rwanda are used to encourage participants to see how essential it is to confront their own need for healing before they can support the healing of others. At one retreat I attended, almost every participant laid his or her head down on the desk during this set of teachings in apparent fatigue and/or contemplation. At the other two retreats (where desks were not provided), people held their heads in their hands for long periods, and made audible sounds of sorrow and relief, or quietly voiced their prayers.<sup>66</sup>

Other key Scripture-based teachings for day one of a PCR retreat sometimes include “the claim of the Cross” and the symbolic importance of “the blood that Jesus shed as the Lamb of God slain for the world” (Rouner, 2002). The teachings on the meaning of the blood Jesus shed were brought in later in PCR’s work to reflect quite literally the “killing fields of Rwanda,” their ground soaked in blood.<sup>67</sup> Blood is also symbolically presented as the giving of oneself to God,

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<sup>63</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009) and expressed by Rouner, (2002, p. 109): “The yearning to be one is instinctive. It is right. It is the God-given way to live. Whatever undercuts that and works for separation, selfishness, and division is devilish and can only come from the Evil One.”

<sup>64</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009); Rouner (2002); and interview with Rwanda Team Leader Patrick on July 24, 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009), confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011.

cleansing and opening the door to forgiveness. As Rouner (2002, p. 8) describes, “The blood of murder can only be cleansed by Jesus’ blood, which was shed in love.”

At all three retreats I observed, by the time the group broke for dinner on the first day, there was already a noticeable difference in the energy in the room, in the amount of contact and conversation between the participants, and even a bit of smiling.<sup>68</sup> Participants were given an assignment to do alone (or in small groups) in the evening, which was to review one or two passages from Scripture and return the next day to discuss them in detail in small groups (or if discussed in groups the night before, each group’s reflections were presented to the larger group in the morning). The two passages appeared to vary a bit, but always included Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians, 5:17) about the new life and new person that is born when one receives Christ.<sup>69</sup> As Rouner (2002, p. 100) writes in regards to this teaching:

An exchange is made. [A person’s] sins are poured into Christ and Christ’s love, in the blood he shed for the world on the Cross...is poured into the sinner as wonderful forgiveness. This is the message of forgiveness to be shared with the world.

*Day two.* On the morning of the second day, PCR retreat leaders generally begin again with prayers and singing, as participants enter the retreat space. Sometimes they ask for input from the participants about their thoughts, prayers, and dreams the previous evening, although this appeared to vary with particular leaders. Then, depending on whether or not participants have met in small groups the previous evening, reflection on the previous evening’s scriptural exercise is conducted in small groups or in the large group. This can take hours, as participants “plumb the depths” of the meaning of this message in their lives (Rouner, 2002, p. 100), thus setting the tone for participants to begin to view themselves as “reconcilers” and “ambassadors” sent to share reconciliation with the world.

Teachings from this point onwards varied a bit across the three retreats I attended (and

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<sup>68</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>69</sup> Rouner confirmed that 2 Corinthians, 5:17 is a core teaching of a PCR retreat, and therefore would probably always occur at a PCR retreat. It reads: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here!”

even in leaders' accounts of how retreats progress). In fact, it was at first hard to discern their progression until I reviewed Rouner's (2002) book. The overall focus is on the "freeing scriptures" (Rouner, 2002, p. 100), and the critical elements of a "new life" through Christ.<sup>70</sup> Thus, there are teachings on reconciliation as God's very highest priority, in bringing us to reconcile with Him and with each other. There are also teachings on Jesus' commandment to love, as for example with John (15:1-17), or Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13).<sup>71</sup> Scriptures on confession (e.g., James 5:16) and repentance (1 John 1:8-9) complement those on the gift of forgiveness (e.g. Matthew 6:14-15; 1 John 1:8-9; and others).<sup>72</sup>

These "freeing scriptures" then lead to a more psychological discussion of the cost of unforgiveness and hatred, whereby a diagram of a heart with all the various wounds participants carry is drawn up on a board. Participants are reminded that the wounds they carry will be passed along to their children. The cost of unforgiveness is drawn as a person (and sometimes his children) bent over with the burden of all these wounds, while one who has forgiven stands upright and free. The retreat leaders may acknowledge that "justice" would require an apology for forgiveness to happen, but they also emphasize the futility of waiting for apology in Rwanda or in any case where the offender will not or cannot apologize.<sup>73</sup>

This discussion of the burden of wounds is generally matter of fact and relatively unemotional, as I observed and Rouner confirmed to me.<sup>74</sup> Yet, it is also at this point in a PCR retreat that the activity shifts towards a very personal and emotional exploration of each participant's wounds.<sup>75</sup> First, the entire group spends time in prayer, as each person is encouraged to contemplate their wounds and the enormous burden such wounds place on their life. They are invited to consider sharing these wounds with Jesus, to let him carry burden with

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<sup>70</sup> Confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009), and from phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009) and from interviews with PCR leaders (2006-2011).



them or for them. Then they meet together in small groups of 3-4 persons or in one large group (depending on the number of participants). Each person is allowed quite a lot of time (varying by the size of the group) to share his or her own personal story of wounding.<sup>76</sup> Other participants in each group, who are usually intentionally selected to be from another ethnicity or experience category, are instructed at length to serve as uncritical and compassionate “witnesses” to the “testimony” of each other.<sup>77</sup> As such, they are to simply listen and affirm their listening without criticism, skepticism, or concern for “accuracy” of the accounts they are about to hear.<sup>78</sup>

Although I did not sit in on any of these small groups as they shared their stories (due to concern for disrupting their process), I observed their sessions from a respectful distance, and saw people listening attentively to each other; often touching, hugging, or repeatedly saying, “hmmmm” to the speaker. I saw many tears and long tearful embraces, and heard many sobs, and other outbursts of sorrow and relief.<sup>79</sup> Then, as each person neared the end of their testimony, they were invited to take their wounds to the Cross, to “lay their burden down to Jesus.”<sup>80</sup> As they did so, other participants circled around them, laying their hands on their shoulders, arms, or back as they kneeled before the Cross together in audible prayer. Again, there were often tears and sobs of joy and pain from many participants during this ceremony. As each person completed their time at the Cross, they were embraced by the others and returned slowly to their seats to begin with another testimony.<sup>81</sup> When all groups had concluded, the large

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<sup>76</sup> The Rouners lead retreats of twelve or at most fifteen persons, and therefore hold this particular activity in a large group, and place no time limit on each person’s testimony. Such was not the case with the retreats I attended, which all had more than 15 participants.

<sup>77</sup> Participants and leaders regularly used the French terms, *etre temoin de* (to be a witness to) and *temoignage* (testimony) regarding the telling of their stories, even when they were not speaking in French.

<sup>78</sup> As I observed, retreat leaders were surprisingly direct about indicating “this Tutsi” and “that Hutu” at the retreat while they were teaching, although when it came to selecting persons to be in small groups together, they did not appear to be as direct.

<sup>79</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009), and confirmed in interview data (2007-2009).

<sup>80</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009). The Cross generally sits in the center of the room throughout the retreat, but is sometimes absent out of respect for the sensibilities of some Protestant sects (data from Rouner [2002] and confirmed in phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

group came back together to share their experiences. It would be obvious even to a casual observer entering a PCR retreat at this moment (as indeed I did on my first visit) that something very profound has occurred for the people present. Study interviewees typically spoke of sharing their wounds with others and then carrying them to the Cross as major breakthroughs in their paths of healing.<sup>82</sup>

Although the scriptural passages for day two vary a bit, the evening activity is always oriented around John 13:1-17, regarding Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet. This reading sets the stage for teachings and activities about "servant ministry" on day three.<sup>83</sup>

*Day three.* On the third day of a PCR retreat, the teachings turn to the topic of "servant ministry," particularly the passage in John 13, when at the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. This is intended to be a "powerful teaching to them about humbling themselves in a ministry as servants," just as Jesus humbled himself in service to his disciples (Rouner, 2002, p. 101). This teaching leads into what Rouner refers to as "the heart of the retreat," the washing of each retreat participant's feet. Retreat leaders, the "servant team," wash each participant's feet, encouraging them also to wash the feet of their followers on return to their congregations.<sup>84</sup> Rouner describes the impact of this activity:

[The foot washing] gathers up what has happened in the previous days, and is a very powerful reminder of what this ministry requires in this wounded country. The bodily message underscores the verbal offerings.....Also, if you are the one washing the feet, it's very profound. Feet are very personal. They walk the hills in their sandals, and their feet may be very dirty....Holding a person's feet, like an old person whose toes are bent the wrong way, it's very intimate.<sup>85</sup>

As I observed, this was indeed a truly powerful moment in a PCR retreat. I myself was moved to tears repeatedly, as participants wept openly and other group members watched and prayed

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<sup>82</sup> Data from interviews (2007-2009).

<sup>83</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2001-2009) and interviews with retreat leaders (2007-2011), as well as Rouner (2002).

<sup>84</sup> This practice reportedly varies across retreats, depending on the composition of the retreats and the leaders present (data from phone interview with Rouner, on January 11, 2011).

<sup>85</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011.

quietly as each person's feet were cleansed. In the moments following each person's foot-washing, there were prayers, songs, tears, laughter, and various other expressions of joy and relief.<sup>86</sup> Retreat participants often reflected on the foot-washing in their interviews with me as the moment they really understood what healing in Rwanda would demand of them, and how they would have to work together.<sup>87</sup> Team Leader Peter (who also led retreats in Uganda and DRC) told me a story of a retreat in Uganda working with the leaders of four pastoral tribes that were often in conflict with each other:

Sometime after the retreat, they heard cows had been stolen from one tribe. Normally war would follow, but the leaders came together and said, 'the old man [Rouner] has washed our feet' so 'those with clean feet' will go off in different directions and find those cows. Eventually all the cows were returned to the tribe from which they had been taken.<sup>88</sup>

There is usually a break after the foot-washing activity for people to continue conversation, take a coffee break, and (with some retreats) pack their belongings to seek transport home after the day's end. Then the entire group reconvenes for "breaking of the bread," as with the Last Supper with Jesus (Rouner, 2002). A celebratory dinner of typical Rwandan fare is always arranged, sometimes along with a local choir, and often with visitors from previous retreats, who join in the celebration to increase the support network for work beyond the retreat (Rouner, 2002).<sup>89</sup> During the celebration, participants of the current retreat and past retreats are invited to give their testimonies about the healing they found at a PCR retreat, which they appeared to readily offer. The testimonies I witnessed were given with remarkable exuberance and hopefulness about Rwanda's future. Participants frequently rushed

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<sup>86</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009), and confirmed in interview data (2007-2009).

<sup>87</sup> Data from interviews (2007-2009).

<sup>88</sup> Data from interview of Team Leader Peter in Kigali, Rwanda on January 25, 2009.

<sup>89</sup> Although ceremonial wine may be employed on these occasions, as Rouner states "we pour out the wine" because these retreats are almost entirely Protestant, and most Rwandan Protestants do not condone the drinking of alcohol. Pouring liquids onto the ground (most typically beer) is recognized by some Rwandans to be a gesture "to our sisters," i.e., ancestors, even when they deny such traditional practices in public (data from contextual interviews, 2006-2009).

up to me in ones and twos to have pictures taken with their Hutu or Tutsi brothers. They moved about saying, “I am a reconciler!” or “I am an ambassador for the tribe of Jesus!” to myself and other visitors. Without prompting, they told me stories of what they had learned and how it changed their perspectives on themselves, the other ethnicity, and their country and their role in its healing – so much so that I was pressed to conduct any kind of interview protocol on some occasions.<sup>90</sup>

### *Findings (PCR)*

As reflected in the above description, many of the impressions I formed about the impact of a PCR retreat on participants were gained from observing the retreats, while other impressions were formed in interviews with participants and program leaders. These were then compared to the documentary information I collected on PCR (see Table 5.1 above).<sup>91</sup> This section presents findings from the analysis of interview data first, and then provides a brief consideration of inconsistencies found between or across data sources.

In my analysis of the PCR interview data, a number of key themes arose, either because their corresponding code(s) occurred so often that they warranted a closer look; or because several codes shaped the development of one particular theme; or because they were particularly interesting in light of the theoretical foundation of this study. In a few cases the name of the theme arose directly from expressions of participants and/or from documentary data (e.g., “I am a new person!”). The themes discussed here fall into two categories, which themselves represent roughly the “before” and “after” effects of a PCR retreat.<sup>92</sup> The first category includes themes that reflect participants’ experiences coming in to the retreats; and the second category includes themes that reflect program impacts, because participants identify them as results of the PCR

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<sup>90</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009). Due to the spontaneity of many of these interactions, I did not record them in audio form, but instead made notes of them.

<sup>91</sup> The methods of coding and comparing data sources to each other was described in Chapter Four and will not be repeated here.

<sup>92</sup> Although I observed several retreats, many of my interviews occurred quite spontaneously during or at the ends of retreats (as it was not feasible to meet the participants before the retreats). Additionally, some interviewees had attended retreats previously. Therefore, all accounts of experiences were given by interviewees in a retrospective manner.

retreat itself. Exemplary quotations are provided for each of the themes within each category.

*Themes: Participants' Experiences*

The most prominent themes that reflect the experiences of participants coming into the retreats include: the pain of violence and division; intra or inter-church tensions; and “wounded healers.”<sup>93</sup>

*Pain of violence and division.* It is important to remember that almost all participants come in to a PCR retreat with profoundly painful personal stories of violence and division, *and* that they attribute their pain to the “other” ethnicity, religion, region, or other salient division. This is not only the case because virtually nobody in Rwanda has escaped the pain of violence and division, but because “PCR’s goal is to reach the most wounded.”<sup>94</sup> Most often “the most wounded” refers to the Tutsi who were targeted for extermination. For example, Maria, at 28 years old, speaks of her experiences as a Tutsi survivor:<sup>95</sup>

We were destroyed...everything was in a mess, so many of us were disabled. And now another big war was how to live with those people who we know killed our neighbors, our families...our sisters and brothers and parents...now we had to live while we had nothing to survive. So, personally, after the genocide I felt it was because of the Hutus, so I didn’t want to see any Hutu, I didn’t want to live with any of them. Because when I lacked anything now I would be having if these people had not killed my parents or relatives. So, everything, all life problems I dedicated to them...it was to the Hutus. Before I went to the retreats, I was getting in a lot of trauma and constant headaches.<sup>96</sup>

Another Tutsi survivor, Patrice, describes his feelings toward Hutu before his first PCR retreat:

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<sup>93</sup> The code “difficulty walking in with” was eventually split into “the pain of violence and division” for non-church related violence and division; and “intra- or inter-church tensions.” The latter was then merged with the codes “changes in churches,” and “church divisions.” “Wounded healers” had its own code from the beginning of data analysis, due to its centrality in PCR teachings and the frequency with which interviewees mentioned it.

<sup>94</sup> See PCR’s Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Pilgrim-Center-forReconciliation/165764443792?v=info>, last accessed on January 10, 2010.

<sup>95</sup> Recall that all names other than Molly and Arthur Rouner are pseudonyms. In many cases, I did not even get a name (as with spontaneous interviews) but I often provide one for easy reference in case an interviewee appears more than once in this work.

<sup>96</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda on January 20, 2009.

Over 75 members of my family were killed during the genocide, including my mother and father and all of my older sisters and brothers. Two of my brothers and myself, we remained alive only because we were young enough to hide, and anyway the killers did not know where to find us....But we were very young, and after the genocide, there was no home that would accept us. Myself, I had only 10 years, and my brothers had 8 and 7. We lived in the streets for some years, and were often separated, the reason being insecurity.... At times a kind person would shelter one of us but not the others, or he would take us, but his wife or [her] husband would oppose....Now I am grown and I am responsible for both of my brothers – their house and food, their education, all their needs. I have to be their father and their mother, even while I myself do not have a father or a mother....So, before [this retreat] my heart was filled with anger, because *everything* had been taken from us. There is not one thing that was not taken from us! And even while we were suffering, with no family to care for us, the Hutu had their fathers and their mothers, their children and their property....I was so angry I arranged to find a gun. So I found one, and I was waiting to use it. Not for any special Hutu, because I don't know who killed my family. I just wanted to kill *any* Hutu. For me, the Hutu were responsible for all the pain we were living in, and only taking revenge would relieve that pain.<sup>97</sup>

Hutu participants at PCR retreats also come in with painful stories of violence and division, but their stories tended to convey feelings of inferiority, and especially about the shame of being Hutu, as with Claude's story:

Before I came to this retreat, I felt such shame at being a "killer." Even if I did not kill, I thought how can people of my tribe be so bad? I thought I must have a darkness, an evil in my heart.<sup>98</sup>

However, some Hutu at PCR retreats (notably the retreat leaders) did speak of specific wrongs done against them, such as the theft of their homes or goods by returning Tutsi from Uganda, or false accusations against them, as in Jude's story:

I came back from the Congo, and it is true, as a Hutu I could not meet the eyes of those [survivors] for the shame of what had been done to them. But those Tutsi from outside, they took my home....a Tutsi took my home, but before he took it he threw an *interahamwe* uniform inside to say that I was a *genocidaire* and to accuse me. Eh, is every Hutu man *interahamwe*? You see, there is no way I can prove that accusation

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<sup>97</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009.

<sup>98</sup> Data from interview in Rwamagana, Rwanda, on July 24, 2007.

false, and if I refuse I will end up in prison, so I can only leave him my house.<sup>99</sup>

*Intra or inter-church tensions.* For some retreat participants, there was not only the ongoing political and ethnic tension; the conflict within and between churches in Rwanda (continuing even after the genocide) has made healing and reconciliation very difficult for them. This particular type of wound was acknowledged early and frequently by the PCR leaders (all of them pastors of churches) at all three retreats I attended. For example, Apollinaire, a young Hutu man, related to me how he had come to the retreat with hatred against the people within his own denomination that had killed his father in a grab for power:

In 1997, we returned to Rwanda, but the Church had become so weak because of all the killing, and conflict on leadership. Not long after we returned, my father was killed and we did not know who killed him, but we heard rumors he had been betrayed by another within our Church [a Philadelphia congregation]. We were so burdened by this, and we were suffering so much because he supported our whole family. When I came to the [PCR] seminar, I was still young and not a pastor, but I think I was meant to come to that seminar. All went well there, and I started to forgive and reconcile. I did not know that at that very retreat was a man who had betrayed my father.<sup>100</sup>

Such tensions between and among churches in their struggle for power (before and after the genocide) were mentioned to me by many study participants in Rwanda, although in the bulk of scholarship on Rwanda, coverage of the role of churches is limited to their role in the genocide.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, Hutu church leaders' participation in betraying or killing Tutsi members of their congregations does appear to be an issue of very grave concern. For example, Tharcisse was an elderly Tutsi survivor still struggling to comprehend how healing could happen between Christians who had killed one another:

When the genocide began, I had eight children, of which only two are still living. I have learned how some of them died, in the most terrible ways you can imagine....I saw two

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<sup>99</sup> Data from interview in Rwamagana, Rwanda on July 25, 2007. Recall from Chapter Two that *interahamwe* refers to a member of one of the genocidal militias that perpetrated the 1994 genocide, while *genocidaire* refers to any of the Hutu killers in the genocide.

<sup>100</sup> Data from interview in Rwamagana, Rwanda on July 26, 2007.

<sup>101</sup> For more coverage of intra- and inter-church struggles, see Longman (2010); and Gatwa (2005).

of them killed by machete...and my youngest son was thrown into a pit latrine while still alive...I have never been told how my wife died...Something that has troubled me very deeply is that all of [my loved ones] were killed by Christian brothers who prayed with us on Sundays, and who carried themselves as righteous Christians. So, we must first find out what is in our hearts -- as Christians...I mean to say, are we really Christians? How can we pray together again now that we know what is between us?<sup>102</sup>

It is clear from the content of retreats that the need for healing among individual Christians and between Christian churches is an issue of critical concern to PCR leaders. It is also clear from the many statements made by both leaders and participants that church leaders feel themselves uniquely charged to promote the nationwide task of healing and reconciliation in Rwanda. This was perhaps nowhere more plainly stated than at the first retreat I attended, where a participant who was a senior *gacaca* official declared that, "Only the church can heal the heart of Rwanda."<sup>103</sup> Yet, to heal other hearts first demands healing one's own, the topic of one of the most prominent themes of this study.

*Wounded healers.* Depending on the participant, the recognition that they were wounded healers came before, during, or after the retreat. At least three retreat participants expressed having had visions or dreams about the retreat beforehand, and specifically that they were to come to the retreat to be healed so that they could heal others. For example, Daniel tells of his vision:

Before this retreat, I have been to this place [Rwamagana]. One year ago, I slept in one of these rooms and I prayed for Jesus to show me how I can help in the healing of my country...I had a vision that I would be here with others, and that we would be collected before the Cross, and that Jesus would heal us here together.<sup>104</sup>

However, it was far more common to hear from participants that they had not realized the depth of their own wounds, and therefore their inability to help others heal, before they came to a PCR retreat – or even after they had already attended a retreat. This was the case with Paul, a 34 year

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<sup>102</sup> Data from interview in Cyangugu, Rwanda on August 8, 2007.

<sup>103</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 26, 2007.

<sup>104</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 26, 2007.



old male pastor and Tutsi survivor who said (laughing):

I was an evangelist, but with those wounds, the problems started happening because I started preaching scriptures that would only point to the Hutus to make them feel bad and hate. I could not preach in a Hutu church. I said I only want to preach in a Tutsi church....Yes, only Tutsis and it was a personal debt. I felt in my heart and I said I cannot find in my heart any word to encourage any Hutu person. I would find those Tutsis who had survived to encourage them and show [them] the reason you weren't finished is because God still has a plan for you, to encourage them, but never the Hutus.<sup>105</sup>

Another retreat participant, Joseph, a Hutu man in his 50s who had been imprisoned (unfairly or not was uncertain) said quite simply:

As pastors, we were wounded, so how could we help others? We can't be doctors if we are sick. Reconciliation requires healing first. No Rwandan, inside or outside of the country, has escaped suffering. We all need God's healing touch.

In another example, Boniface, a Tutsi retreat leader talked to me about how he used to look out into the faces of the crowd on Sunday and decide what message to give there by what kind of faces he saw – Hutu or Tutsi. Later, when he was healed, he realized:

They [Hutu] are traumatized, with some of the same difficulties we have. But we pastors who are deeply wounded may shout, jump, sing – but actually we are hiding! Even the rumors can traumatize us because we are not yet healed. Then on Sundays, we may bring curses instead of comfort. So, you see in numbers Rwanda is very Christian, but not truly in our hearts.<sup>106</sup>

### *Themes: Program Impacts*

A number of codes developed in data analysis reflected the perceived impacts of the program, as identified by the participants themselves.<sup>107</sup> Some were split while others were merged and then prioritized into the most salient themes, including: feeling like a new person;

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<sup>105</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009.

<sup>106</sup> Data from interview in Rwamagana, July 25, 2007.

<sup>107</sup> Original codes in the area of program impacts included: “build future together,” “evangelization,” “fearlessness,” “forgiveness/reconciliation,” “Jesus frees,” “unity,” “mission in life,” “renewal,” and “spiritual surrender.” Names of several were changed to more closely match theme to code contents.

fearlessness; spiritual surrender; mission in life; greater unity as Rwandans; desire to build a better life; and forgiveness and the intention to forgive. Because some participants' expressions of healing showed a certain reserve (described below), and other participants described having to attend multiple retreats to feel fully healed, an additional theme entitled "learning across multiple retreats" appears at the end of the others.

*Feeling like a new person.* Many participants at the PCR retreats I observed expressed feelings of renewal, of unburdening a heavy load, or of discovering an entirely new person within themselves. Often these were expressions made in passing as they rushed up to me at the end of a retreat, as with a middle-aged Tutsi man who lost most of his family in the genocide, who exclaimed to me, "I am new in my heart. I am a new creature. I am no longer from the tribe of Tutsi, but from the tribe of Jesus!"<sup>108</sup> A younger Tutsi man also approached me at the end of the same retreat to talk to me about the burden lifting from his heart:

I had no idea how powerful God's love is! I did not know such healing was possible. I came to this retreat full of bitterness and the desire to revenge the deaths of my family. But now I feel like I have had heart surgery, like someone has come in and taken the heavy and dark out of my heart...I have a new life and I'm going to give it to Jesus!"<sup>109</sup>

At other times such expressions of renewal occurred within longer interviews or testimonies, as with Patrick, the Hutu Team Leader for Rwanda, who spoke of seeing his partner as a new person:

Peter and I we have worked together for three years. We were both good pastors, but we went in our different directions and did not travel together. Problems of Hutu and Tutsi! He was a Tutsi who left Uganda, a place of the "cockroaches." I ran through Goma. I could not work for him. We took a five week trip to Tanzania, Goma, Bukavu, and I avoided him the whole way. He did the same! I was very angry at the Tutsi. I could not go to fetch water because I could not be in that place of the Tutsi. After, I saw that this

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<sup>108</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 26, 2007.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

man was suffering, that he is a good man, my friend. I embraced him. That was Peter – a new Peter! When God healed me, I saw a different man. Now we eat and sleep together. He is a friend of mine because of the Cross.<sup>110</sup>

In another example, a Hutu retreat participant gave his testimony at the end of a retreat about being a new kind of pastor:

This experience of being born again is so important. As I have been born again, I am no longer my own, as I thought I was before. I can no longer do what I want to do. Even Jesus did what God wanted him to do. We are here for a reason, and for only a short time. To think, to live, to talk – all of these must be done for God. We are made in the image of God and can hold our heads high...Nothing is accidental. What has happened to us in Rwanda, God can take those wounds, those scars and make stars. We are new people, we are new pastors!<sup>111</sup>

*Fearlessness.* Curiously, most of the expressions of fearlessness I heard were very short and embedded within longer passages that were easily associated with other themes (e.g., spiritual surrender). Passing mentions of no longer being fearful caught my attention because expressions of fear were so common in my research in Rwanda. Practically every subset of the population has something to fear from the some other social subset, whether that is fear of property loss, false accusations and recrimination (on the part of Hutu) or of reprisals or continuation of the “work” of killing left unfinished (on the part of Tutsi). People of all groups express fears about running afoul of the government (as with its mandate for full participation in the *gacaca*) or of falling victims to one of its policies (as with the destruction of entire neighborhoods deemed as “slums”).<sup>112</sup> Sometimes, expressions of fearlessness at PCR retreats were accompanied with a degree of surprise, as for example, with a middle-aged Tutsi survivor who stated simply, “Something very shocking has happened -- I am no longer afraid!” Similarly, a young Hutu woman said, “Now I know I can meet whatever will happen in Rwanda without fear, knowing that God will always take care of us. I never suspected that before! I do not know

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<sup>110</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 24, 2007.

<sup>111</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 26, 2007.

<sup>112</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009). In my repeated visits to Rwanda, I saw multiple neighborhoods razed, while the government also enforced a mandate that all property owners replace their walls and fences made of grass or bushes with cinder blocks.

what is his will, but I know he is in charge.”<sup>113</sup>

*Spiritual surrender.* Closely related to expressions of fearlessness were expressions of surrendering to a larger purpose, and specifically to God’s will. For example, Jeremiah, a middle-aged Hutu man describes:

We are His ambassadors on earth. That means we represent Him, not us, and not other men. We are very free, but not to live for ourselves. We live for Jesus, and we live for his work here on earth. We represent Him!”<sup>114</sup> \

Peter, the Tutsi Team Leader of Rwanda described his experience in this way:

I was not healed until I humbled myself before our heavenly Father. I had to humble myself beneath the mighty hand of God for Him to raise me up. Dignity, pride, self-importance, the hatred and preoccupation of our lives...all of those keep us from being humble. If we set ourselves aside, if we are humble, we can begin to understand and to forgive. You see, life is given to us when we loosen our grip, when we stop holding on or trying to make it right. We don’t have to make it right! He makes it right! You see? I gave my life away, and when I did that, I began to live more freely.<sup>115</sup>

*Mission in life.* Very closely related to the theme of spiritual surrender was the theme of having a new mission in life, and in particular a mission of helping to heal Rwanda. This was the most common refrain in the interviews and in the testimonies given at retreats. Significantly, many survivors expressed their belief that their life had been saved in order to fulfill a healing mission in Rwanda. For example, Maria, the female Tutsi survivor mentioned previously, describes this experience for her:

I saw a lot of bad things and I cannot say...it cannot be because I hid so well or anything else because I saw many people being raped, many people being crucified, so many people being killed...and terrible deaths they were given. I will always remember, always remember my brother who was thrown in a pit latrine when he was still alive. It is only because God saw that I would not die, I was only saved by God, that is why I can stand and talk about this today. It is not because of what I did...it is not because I was righteous or did any good thing. God kept protecting me, protecting my life because maybe what He wanted me to do. I believe he kept me alive so that this time I can teach about reconciliation. I teach them [in that school] to live with each other in peace and love, those people who killed to ask for forgiveness, and those who survived to forgive,

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<sup>113</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>114</sup> Data from interview in Cyangugu, Rwanda, on July 24, 2007.

<sup>115</sup> Data from interview with Rwanda Team Leader Peter, in Kigali, Rwanda, on August 7, 2007.

and those whose parents are in prison, to live in peace with those people who put their parents in prison. I am personally touched to do it, it has changed me so much. I am even one of the people who help people who are traumatized, with memories and all that, and I was once one of them! (Laughing) Now I help those people.<sup>116</sup>

Similarly, Paul, the Tutsi survivor mentioned previously (now a pastor) speaks of how he has been enabled to do God's work with a parish of mostly Hutu:

I felt relieved of the heavy weight and I took the good news to the people [of my congregation], telling them because most of them didn't want to go to church, or to hear anything about God, how could God let people kill us like that if he was there and if he loved us. So, I was the first person to be healed [at PCR] in my district, which has enabled me to do God's work in that place. At Kamonyi, we have two hundred and fifty people together, survivors and the people who [killed], the prisoners. We bring them together [at the school] they are doing different things, some sewing school, some construction school, others art and craft...because of PCR, the heart has budded in me and God has trusted me to lead the parish of over 38,000, and only less than a thousand of them are Tutsi.<sup>117</sup>

Dieu Donne, a confessed killer, described his new mission in life in the following way:

With the experiences we have had here, I think God might be training us for the work that is ahead. It is something we can do together, to carry that message of reconciliation through. God wants to do something new with us now.<sup>118</sup>

*Greater unity as Rwandans.* It was not uncommon to hear an interviewee reflect on a greater identity for all Rwandans, as indeed the leaders of the retreats also focused on this particular theme. Paul, the Tutsi survivor and pastor laughingly said to me over lunch:

In one of the retreats, we said we need another tribe because we are not Hutu and we are not Tutsi! Please find us another in the middle there so we can get where to belong (laughing). Maybe one day we can have a President who will be one parent Hutu and one parent Tutsi, so that everyone will know when they see this person, they are in the middle so it's OK. But for us, we know we are one.<sup>119</sup>

Finding unity as Rwandans was often expressed as having a common identity in Christ, as with

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<sup>116</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009; conducted in Kinyarwanda and translated to English for later transcription.

<sup>117</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

Frederic, a Hutu returnee from Congo who said this:

We cannot depend on ancestors, tribes, regions, families. Jesus is the savior of us all - Hutu, Tutsi, Black, White. To be in Christ will make us new - our differences will be forgotten. Before 1994, we didn't even say Hutu, we said Hutu from the North. We could boast of that, but it got old. Being a child of God never gets old!<sup>120</sup>

The senior *gacaca* official mentioned previously (also a PCR participant) expressed his plea for unity at the end of the PCR retreat in this way:

Let us consider the way forward, brothers and sisters. It is simple, very simple. Let us break down this chain of fear and vengeance, this story of Hutu and Tutsi. We stand together as brothers and sisters, as Rwandans!<sup>121</sup>

Perhaps most significantly, pairings or groups of PCR retreat participants sometimes go on to do their own work promoting reconciliation, as with one Hutu interviewee named Albert, who describes how he and a Tutsi woman in Ruhengeri are working together:

[She] calls me brother, though she is a Tutsi. The work we are doing is bearing fruit all over the country. The work of healing and reconciliation has really impacted the Rwandan community. It is time to cross the borders of discrimination and help each other.<sup>122</sup>

*Desire to build a better life together.* The simple ability and desire to work together as Hutu and Tutsi on community problems was mentioned many times by participants of all the programs in this study. At PCR, that included Dieu Donne, who had served thirteen years in prison, and was teaching construction at a church-affiliated school:

So, later I got a chance to be in the retreat for healing and reconciliation...there were different categories of survivors and us who killed and then later we talked and we saw the problems together and we [tried to] find solutions together and everybody does what he can do to make sure that everything gets better. So after destroying the community now I went back and I offered to teach them construction so that they can earn a living,

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<sup>120</sup> Data from interview in Cyangugu, Rwanda, on August 8, 2007.

<sup>121</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 2007.

<sup>122</sup> Data from interview in Rwamagana, Rwanda on July 24, 2007.

some of them earn a living, and others can start reconstructing their own things back together and they can use it again as a way of survival.<sup>123</sup>

Gilbert, a young Tutsi male survivor, also describes working together as an important outcome of a retreat he had attended previously. Yet, he seemed very fatigued, closing his eyes and looking away frequently, and I wondered whether his response would seem less fatigued after more retreats (see discussion below):

After I have received Jesus Christ as my savior, those who killed my family, they came to say they are sorry, and I said I have already forgiven....There is no wound in my heart because Jesus has already held me, made me free, made me safe. I say let's build things. I am now a grown man, I cannot always live in the past. We must build new things together. But those who killed my family, we are joined together, we solve problems together. Enough is enough. We build a new family and a new country.<sup>124</sup>

*Forgiveness and the intention to forgive.* There were many outward gestures and testimonies of forgiveness at the PCR retreats I observed. One example is Apollinaire, the young Hutu mentioned previously. His father had been killed by a person in his own church, and that person (unbeknownst to him) had been at his first PCR retreat. Apollinaire describes:

Before I went to the retreat, I wanted only revenge. But in that retreat, I was transformed. The moment I forgave [him], I felt a darkness lift from my heart. Before I was filled with hate and could not be happy. I could get angry at any small thing because I had rage in my heart. I am so grateful...God knew what was in my heart, but before I shared with these people, I did not know it! Reconciling, forgiving, has brought peace to my heart, it has resolved the conflict in my own heart. Reconciliation has brought peace in my mind, it has given me a sense of humanity.<sup>125</sup>

Another Hutu participant of a retreat named Innocent did not detail what he was forgiving, but simply exclaimed, "If Jesus could forgive those people while they were killing him, if he could say those words 'Father forgive them, they do not know what they do,' then I can too!"

Likewise, Antoine (a Tutsi) did not give details of his pain in his testimony, but declared:

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<sup>123</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009.

<sup>124</sup> Data from interview in Cyangugu, Rwanda on August 8, 2007.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

I never knew how forgiveness can heal the one who has hurt you. That is the connection between faith and love...when you forgive someone who has hurt you, even if it is very deeply, you are opening the doors so that Christ will come to him.<sup>126</sup>

Among the anecdotes of forgiveness I heard from PCR leaders, there were some of marriages or adoption of children across Hutu-Tutsi lines, although I did not meet any such people personally. However, I did witness a remarkable change in a middle-aged Tutsi woman's demeanor from the first to the last day of the retreat. On the first day, she appeared to avoid eye contact and interaction with everyone, even myself despite my best efforts to engage her as the only other woman present. By the third day, she was laughing and exchanging hugs with one particular Hutu man, and she testified about their new friendship in the closing celebration.<sup>127</sup>

In addition to the many gestures and testimonies of repentance and forgiveness that I witnessed at the retreats, many interviewees mentioned the intention to forgive or reconcile with someone when they returned home.<sup>128</sup> For example, a young Tutsi man recounted:

My brothers and my parents were killed in the genocide. I have only a sister who remains. I know who killed my parents, and I see him walking free in my town. I have hated him very much. I have been so tempted to take revenge, and I even thought it was justified, although as you can see I am a Christian. After this retreat, I can tell you I am very anxious to get home. I am going to seek out this man [the killer] and tell him it is over between us. I have forgiven [him].<sup>129</sup>

Paul, the pastor, told a similar story of his return to his community after one of his retreats:

So after that [retreat] I took initiative and went to the public and said I forgive all the people who killed my family and who took everything that belonged to them...and so most of the people from both sides have been seeing me as the model for them, now they can see I am trusted from both sides. The Tutsis they are getting me as their own and now the Hutus they see now what I've done and they say he is really, this man is really honest and he's a good man and so they came together.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 2007.

<sup>127</sup> Data from fieldnotes on July 26, 2007, where I noted "The one woman who had a face like stone on the first day was beaming at everyone today."

<sup>128</sup> Significantly, some pledges to forgive others on return home had nothing to do with ethnic violence or other social conflict, but rather inter-familial conflict.

<sup>129</sup> Data from interview in Cyangugu, Rwanda, on August 8, 2007.

<sup>130</sup> Data from interview on January 20, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.



In another notable example, the Hutu Team Leader for Rwanda told a story of when he led a retreat at a widows' organization (AVEGA). He said the women were very angry with him and would not speak to him at first. But after the retreat, one of them told him she had taken action to release a Hutu man she had falsely accused before the *gacaca*.<sup>131</sup>

*Learning across multiple retreats.* In addition to Rwanda Team Leader Peter, who needed three retreats to “drop those luggages [sic],” five of the people I interviewed spoke of their need to attend multiple retreats for the healing to really “get to the heart.”<sup>132</sup> In particular, the Tutsi accounts of healing in early retreats had a distinct element of “not being left behind” while the Hutu found their salvation. For example, Maria, the Tutsi survivor mentioned previously, describes her first retreat:

So after the teachings in that retreat I caught, I received the healing, it was like someone had lifted something very heavy from me and I got to understand and said what would happen if we kept saying they died, they died, they died and we don't do anything when other people -- those Hutu -- are going forward, then we are not doing anything, we are only mourning for the people in the past. Now what if we do, we keep mourning for them while others are advancing, so what about us, what are we going to be? Are we getting any better or are we actually getting worse? So I decided it's really true, I don't have to keep my mind in the past, let me put myself together and look forward. And then I grasped the teachings and personalized them and started putting them in practice. Then I started living with the neighbors in peace and seeing them as relatives, as close people, as friends. It was only after the repetition that I could do that...I attended five retreats!<sup>133</sup>

Similarly, Paul, the survivor and now pastor, said:

So I felt the passion (laughing) and said now I am hearing testimonies from prisons and [Hutu] people are getting saved in the prisons, so I felt another great desire to [help] the Tutsis. They lost all their worldly things, now how about if they keep going like this? They can even miss heaven, which is not good! So I felt moved and pushed by that desire saying, telling them now you are here complaining [about] the people who killed your families, but they are getting saved they are giving their lives to God and they are getting a better future, they are getting hope and they are getting heaven and you are losing everything! You lose here, and you lose there! Later [after more retreats] I came

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<sup>131</sup> Data from interview with PCR Team Leader Patrick, in Rwamagana, Rwanda, on July 26, 2007.

<sup>132</sup> Data from interview of Team Leader Peter in Kigali, Rwanda, on July 13, 2007.

<sup>133</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009.

to bring them close together. Before my heart moved too much for the Tutsis, but then it moved to the Hutus, saying to them that you cannot be bad people here and reach heaven, so you can make it better in the future, and we can come all together.<sup>134</sup>

Finally, one quite young Tutsi woman, having only attended one retreat as the administrative aide to the program, was frank in saying that she had not yet reached full healing:

Yeah, they have come to say they are sorry, and I say I have already forgiven. But sometimes when I remember those bad things, I feel very bad in my heart. Prayer helps me, and I know that is enough. But in my heart, even though there are not many wounds, I will not say there are no wounds. If I think of all that I have lost, sometimes I cannot turn my mind from how life would be different if [my family] were here. So, it's a small wound that is still there...I have Hutu landlords, and I am coming to see that they are people too. After the genocide, being a Hutu was like being a curse. Now I think they must be people too, but I think I am not yet completely healed in my heart.<sup>135</sup>

In summary, as shown by the themes that arose from data analysis, the interview data appeared to be largely congruent with observational and documentary data, although there were a few inconsistencies across and within data sources, which is discussed next.

#### *Inconsistencies Across and Within Data Sources*

Some inconsistencies were found between observational, interview, and documentary data, several of which have been noted in passing in footnoted material in the preceding discussion. For example, the maximum size of a PCR retreat and the degree to which people knew each other appeared to vary more than the documentary data suggests, although this is likely a difference due to the actual leadership of the retreats, i.e. whether it is led by the Rouners or by local leaders. Aside from perhaps affecting the quality of a retreat (as larger groups are presumably less intimate), this inconsistency was not deemed to be substantive.

Another inconsistency found in the data analysis process was the variance in the evangelistic urge and message of PCR leaders, which appeared to vary from leader to leader and across statements made by the same leaders. For example Rouner's (2002) book states great

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<sup>134</sup> Data from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, on January 20, 2009.

<sup>135</sup> Informal interview with PCR staff member, in Kigali, Rwanda, in December of 2008.

enthusiasm for PCR's participation in a worldwide revival, but he also expresses a reticence to be overly "preachy" in retreats, stating that PCR is "not here to persuade."<sup>136</sup> Yet, although the intensity and scope of evangelism may differ across leaders (i.e. local or national, versus regional or global), it is quite clear that all PCR leaders in Rwanda are evangelical Christians. The degree to which PCR's model rests on participants "coming to Christ" is important in a country where many have left religion altogether and others have converted to Islam (Wax, 2002; Walker, 2004; Kubai, 2007); and where evangelical Christians have privileged access to governmental power (discussed in *Political Considerations* section below). Furthermore, although I heard no PCR leader stating negative views on the "unsaved" during a retreat, I did hear such persons referred to as "damned" and "condemned" on a regular basis in Rwandan evangelical churches (including Peter's).<sup>137</sup> Such statements certainly caught my attention and aroused my concern in a country where divisive us/them language has been so readily employed in the churches.

Lastly, a critical inconsistency was noted in PCR leaders' acknowledgement of the depth and variety of Rwandan suffering, although it was an inconsistency between the messages reflected in *all* PCR data sources versus the reality of the Rwandan context, rather than between sources of data. This inconsistency will be discussed in more depth in the section *Political Considerations* below, and in Chapters Six and Seven.

### *Political Considerations (PCR)*

There are several political considerations that are worthy of mention in viewing PCR's work in Rwandan reconciliation: its role as one of many organizations promoting unity and reconciliation; its mission as an evangelical organization; its position on critical issues in Rwandan politics and history; and its direct relations with the government. Each of these aspects is introduced briefly here, and will be referred to in later analysis.

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<sup>136</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011. However, Rouner's reluctance to "persuade" may be in regards to forgiveness and reconciliation, rather than to "coming to Christ" more generally. This distinction was not explored in interviews with Rouner.

<sup>137</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

First, PCR is one of “numerous associations and interfaith groups... that are contribut[ing] to understanding and tolerance among various religious groups” in Rwanda today.<sup>138</sup> Its national and local leaders participate actively in groups, such as the Interfaith Commission for Rwanda, that “support programs aimed at reconciling genocide survivors, released genocide prisoners, and genocide detainees’ families.”<sup>139</sup> It has significant linkages with other entities promoting reconciliation in Rwanda (e.g., World Vision; the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission; and churches throughout the country) and prominent individuals engaged in reconciliation work on a national level.<sup>140</sup> Although PCR did not appear to be well-known in Rwanda (some other key contacts in reconciliation had never heard of it), it is one of a growing number of religious reconciliation programs run by “foreign missionaries and church-linked NGOs of various religious groups” operating in Rwanda today. Such organizations “openly promote their religious beliefs and the government welcome[s] their development assistance.”<sup>141</sup> American evangelicals in particular have been able to mobilize sizable funding for Christian initiatives in Rwanda, particularly Christian reconciliation programs (Cantrell, 2007; 2009).<sup>142</sup>

Secondly, PCR’s mission as an evangelical organization must be considered within a national, regional, and global frame. Nationally, PCR clearly intends to have (at least) country-wide impact, as was reflected in numerous leaders’ statements about “bringing the healing of the Cross to all of Rwanda.”<sup>143</sup> It intentionally targets religious leaders (although not exclusively so)

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<sup>138</sup> See the United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (September 14, 2007). *International Religious Freedom Report – Rwanda*, at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90115.htm>, last accessed on January 11, 2011.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009) and interviews (2006-2011).

<sup>141</sup> See the United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (September 14, 2007). *International Religious Freedom Report – Rwanda*, at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90115.htm>, last accessed on January 11, 2011. Also from this source: “There has been a proliferation of small, usually Christian-linked schismatic religious groups since the 1994 genocide” – some PCR leaders, including Peter, are leaders of these groups.

<sup>142</sup> Although PCR is not a well-known organization in Rwanda, it does draw on a donor base of evangelical individuals and organizations in the U.S. (Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011).

<sup>143</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

from across the spectrum of Rwanda's Christian churches, in order to amplify the effects of their healing and assist in reconstructing broken church and community relations across Rwanda.<sup>144</sup> Regionally, PCR leaders and participants regularly state their desire to bring the healing of the Cross to other countries of the region, as with as Team Leader Patrick's proclamation at a retreat, "The people of Rwanda and Congo will change Africa with the truth of the Cross!"<sup>145</sup> On an international scale, it would seem from Rouner's (2002) book and PCR materials distributed in the US that PCR intends to have world-wide impact. As Rouner (2002, p. 83) observes:

Where the dark is so deep, and the need is so great, people are more willing to "try anything" in the realm of Christian healing, the dynamics of prayer, the simple truth of human relationships, and in the overwhelming power of love. Americans...resist some of this ministry, but Rwanda and Burundi give the Western Church a *front line* for learning the things that are needed in the West (emphasis added).<sup>146</sup>

In short, all sources of data indicate that PCR leaders (to varying degrees) intend to participate in national, regional, and even global Christian revival. Furthermore, the need for profound reconciliation in Rwanda is seen as the engine (or the "frontline") for that revival. Yet, PCR is only one relatively small actor in this process; as described in Chapter Two, Rwanda is at the center of a dramatic revivalist movement led by American and Rwandan evangelicals, which is implicated in the schism in the worldwide Episcopalian church over the issue of homosexuality (Cantrell 2007; 2009).<sup>147</sup> Without entering into more detail than is necessary here, it is important to note that PCR is one player in an

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<sup>144</sup> Data from documentary materials, fieldnotes (2007-2009), and from interviews with PCR leaders (2006-2011). Interview data also indicates that PCR retreat leaders have organized a number of evangelical programs, such as crusades for youth and ministries for needy populations all over the country. At one retreat I attended, the participants calculated that they represented over 50,000 Christians in sum.

<sup>145</sup> Data from fieldnotes, August 8, 2007. After this statement, Patrick broke immediately into a song about carrying the Cross (*salaba*) across the land, and retreat participants joined him in enthusiastic song and dance.

<sup>146</sup> Rouner (2002, p. 82) observes that the American churches have drifted away from the gift of Jesus' healing towards [conventional] medicine, whereas the African church is much more ready to take the risk of healing through Jesus. He adds that African "ideas and assumptions of [b]iblical healing are not nearly as alien to them. So, in Africa, we have the chance to take this risk."

<sup>147</sup> Although PCR's relationship to the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA) established by Rwandan Archbishop Kolini (described in chapter Two) is unclear, PCR leaders at the *national* level demonstrated quite negative opinions of homosexuality (data from interviews, 2007-2009).

increasingly strong transatlantic current of conservative evangelism.

The third important consideration in regards to PCR's reconciliation work is its position on critical issues in Rwandan politics and history, and in particular its concordance with the RPF-dominated government's position on such issues. PCR leaders were not effusively positive about the government, but they did express favorable views of its efforts in the area of reconciliation in particular. On various occasions, Rwanda Team Leaders stated to me that the government "looks everywhere to see what can be done to help people reconcile," or that "the government does all the things that it can, while letting the churches do the deeper healing work."<sup>148</sup> Yet, a number of interviewees from outside the organizations I studied argued that the one thing the government could and should do -- admit that some atrocities were committed against Hutu -- is something it strenuously resists doing.<sup>149</sup> That there are also *Hutu* survivors of *Tutsi* violence in Rwanda cannot have escaped the Rwandan PCR leaders' attention; and this is where the PCR position on violence and division in Rwanda becomes complicated.

On the one hand, one of the most notable things about a PCR retreat is its implicit recognition that Hutu have suffered, and even that they have suffered at the hands of Tutsi. In the context of a "new Rwanda" that has essentially outlawed the terms "Hutu" and "Tutsi" while prosecuting thousands of Hutu and no Tutsi at the *gacaca*, here were retreat leaders readily pointing out who was from which ethnicity at a retreat. Often they pointed to "this Hutu" or "that Tutsi," saying such things as, "Tell this Tutsi what his fellow Tutsi did to you!" or "Remember the cows the Hutu ate and how the Tutsi beat you down."<sup>150</sup> At times there was even mild criticism of the *gacaca*, as with, "At the *gacaca*, people are supposed to tell the truth.

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<sup>148</sup> Data from interview with Team Leader Peter in Kigali, Rwanda on July 13, 2007; and Patrick in Rwamagana, Rwanda on July 24, 2007.

<sup>149</sup> A number of Hutu *and* Tutsi outside the organizations I studied identified the government's refusal to acknowledge crimes committed by its own members as serious impediments to lasting peace in Rwanda. On the matter of the *gacaca*, Rwanda Team Leaders made it clear to me that it should never try the Tutsi because they "had not committed genocide" (data from interview with Team Leader Peter on July 13, 2007; and Patrick on July 24, 2007). Although defensible in semantic terms, this argument does not answer the question of whether the RPF committed *atrocities*, or whether Hutu survivors of those atrocities need acknowledgement.

<sup>150</sup> Data from fieldnotes, (2007-2009).

But they are always having to defend themselves, so where will the truth come from?”<sup>151</sup>

Indeed, the acknowledgement that Hutu have suffered is critical to the success of a retreat, as Rouner states:

The attitude that “We [Tutsi] are the only ones who suffered” is such a problem in Rwanda. Both sides have suffered so terribly. So, acknowledging Hutu suffering changes the equation in a retreat.<sup>152</sup>

Notwithstanding the importance of recognizing Hutu suffering, there do appear to be limitations on the types of Hutu suffering that are recognized at PCR. In all the interviews I conducted and informal interactions I had, and in the three retreats I attended, forms of Hutu suffering only included: Tutsi oppression during the colonial era (but not the pre-colonial era, which was presented as “peaceful and harmonious”); the shame Hutu feel at being “killers”; violence committed by other Hutu; theft of homes and property by returning Tutsi after the genocide; and violence due to church conflicts. At no point did I hear recognition that at least some Hutu have been affected by Tutsi *violence*.<sup>153</sup> Relative to the RPF government’s stance on who has suffered in Rwanda, PCR both pushes the boundaries by recognizing Hutu suffering, *and* stays within the boundaries in regards to Tutsi (specifically RPF) violence against Hutu.

Supporting PCR’s limited approach to the complexity of violence and division in Rwanda is the notable lack of understanding of Rwandan history and politics among the American founders and supporters of PCR. As shown in Rouner’s (2002) book; video material on PCR’s Facebook page; and from conversations with the Rouners and American visitors to PCR in January of 2009, quite troublesome aspects of Rwandan politics are conveyed as unproblematic, if unfortunate, facts of Rwanda’s situation. For example, a video shown on PCR’s Facebook page states that divisions between Hutu and Tutsi were begun by the Belgians, although very compelling historical evidence indicates rising tension between groups began before Germany or

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<sup>151</sup> Data from fieldnotes (July 24, 2007).

<sup>152</sup> Data from phone interview with Rouner on January 11, 2011.

<sup>153</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

Belgium arrived (Vansina, 2004; Newbury, 1988; Mamdani, 2001). In another example, Rouner (2002, p. 70) quite incorrectly recounts that “When colonial power withdrew...in this case with little reparation for transition...it was in the hands of the Tutsis that they left the government.”<sup>154</sup> Not long after, he observes that most churches today are led by returning Tutsi from Uganda (p. 89, 2002), but does not express any concern about this imbalance or its reflection of the greater dynamic of political power in Rwanda today.

As described in Chapter Two, such relative ignorance of Rwandan political affairs is not at all unique to the American founders of PCR. As Cantrell (2007; 2009) wrote while this study was still being conducted, American evangelists are uninformed of the complexities of the political context because most (if not all) of their information comes from the Ugandan Tutsi leading the majority of churches in Rwanda. Lacking perspective on how complex and troublesome the situation is, evangelicals (or more specifically, Americans) uncritically embrace the government’s position and approach to reconciliation, thus by default bolstering the RPF’s power. In the case of PCR, it appears that Rwanda Team Leaders do not inform their American sponsors of the complexities of division, violence, and reconciliation in Rwanda.<sup>155</sup>

The final important consideration in regards to PCR’s work is an unsurprising extension of the prior three. Notwithstanding PCR’s relatively modest profile among Christian reconciliation programs in Rwanda today, its national leaders are well-connected and situated in regards to governmental power in Rwanda, as I witnessed on a number of occasions.<sup>156</sup>

However, as was shown in Chapter Two, NGOs that distance themselves from or criticize the

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<sup>154</sup> As described in Chapter Two, the transition to Hutu power began before independence. Due to incorrect understanding of the sequence of events, Rouner (2002, p. 70) “corrects” his account sentences later, with the statement: “Then when the West demanded democracy as a price for cooperation and help, the majority Hutus voted overwhelmingly for representatives from their own tribe.” This description is an odd account of the events leading up to the “Hutu Revolution” of 1959, and the installation of the first Hutu-led government.

<sup>155</sup> As another example, Rosenblum (2010) quotes Rouner stating that “Forgiveness is a national policy in Rwanda....There are very few countries in the world that take that on as a policy....The leaders realized that they had 130,000 people in jail on charges of genocide. It would take 100 years to process. So, they said, ‘We have to find a way to forgive.’” Even pro-RPF scholars credit the RPF with establishing the *gacaca* out of the impracticality of punishing everyone and the need to build a new future, rather than sentiments of forgiveness.

<sup>156</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).



government easily run afoul of ambiguous “genocide ideology” laws, and are quickly shut down. Thus, some degree of cooperation and consonance with the government should be seen as a necessary accommodation. Whether PCR’s stance is accommodation or agreement was not sufficiently clarified in this study, but is analyzed in more depth in Chapter Seven.

#### *Case Summary (PCR)*

The preceding sections have described field access and applications of methods, as well as PCR’s origins and leadership; mission, vision, values and goals; programmatic approach; the healing and reconciliation retreats; findings derived from data analysis; and political considerations. In summary, PCR is a Christian NGO founded by American evangelists in collaboration with Rwandan evangelists, which initially served primarily church leaders recovering from genocide and war throughout the region. It intentionally seeks out “the most wounded” from either side of religious, ethnic or other divides and engages them in a retreat-based reconciliation approach based on biblical teachings, reflection, and interpersonal experiences.

PCR retreats are three days in length and generally serve between ten and twenty people at once. The standard PCR retreat incorporates teachings on “rest” with Jesus; “wounded healers”; the “freeing scriptures” on commandments to love and being made anew through forgiveness and reconciliation; and finally, servant ministry and leadership. The approach employed is experiential, rather than cognitive or discursive. It focuses on individual psychological healing as a means to heal communities and nations. It also reduces leadership hierarchies and invites participants to engage empathetically with their own suffering and suffering of others. Pivotal ceremonies and rituals in the retreat include the sharing of personal wounds and taking them “to the Cross”; cleansing of the feet in preparation for servant ministry; and the Last Supper with fellow “ambassadors of Jesus.”

Analysis of PCR data led to the development of a number of participant-identified outcomes of retreats, which correspond to the themes of “feeling like a new person”;

fearlessness; spiritual surrender; mission in life; greater unity as Rwandans; desire to build a better life together; and forgiveness or the intention to forgive. The fuller range of participant-identified outcomes were only identified for some participants after multiple retreats. For many participants, a PCR retreat is the first place they have ever told their story, much less in such depth to members of a group of people they may have felt deeply distrustful of before the retreat.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, multiple types of data generally indicated very powerful experiences for both participants and observers of PCR retreats.

Politically speaking, PCR is one of a growing number of Christian evangelical organizations supported by Americans and operating in Rwanda today. It therefore enjoys a favorable relationship with the RPF-led government. As such, it is able to operate relatively freely and even to push some boundaries on recognition of Hutu suffering. However, it stops short of acknowledging RPF abuses and atrocities.

#### Case Report: Gahaya Links

Gahaya Links is a Rwandan export company that manages a network of over 4,000 women weavers across Rwanda, who are organized in over fifty cooperatives.<sup>158</sup> These cooperatives are comprised of many smaller groups of women weavers in both rural and urban areas throughout Rwanda. Due to Gahaya Links' economic success, it has been recognized by many organizations at home and abroad as fostering women's empowerment and post-genocide reconciliation.<sup>159</sup> The Gahaya Links business model involves training weavers at the village level to greatly improve the quality of their goods; organizing them into local cooperatives; providing them with markets and orders for their goods; and training them in a number of related areas which are intended to contribute to their economic and social advancement, as well as

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<sup>157</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009) and interviews (2006-2011).

<sup>158</sup> Data from Gahaya Links website, "Who We Are," at: <http://www.gahayalinks.com/about-us>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

<sup>159</sup> See variety of articles and news releases about Gahaya Links, including Creative and Innovative Economy Center (n.d.), International Executive Service Corps (2006), USAID (2009), The Hunger Project (2008), Mukaaya (2008), Nkurunziza (2009), McLymont (2006), USADF (n.d.), Brody (2009), and the IFC (2008).

reconciliation.<sup>160</sup> Currently, Gahaya Links products can be bought in the US at Macy's, Starbucks, Fairwinds Trading Inc., and other distributors.

Because the Gahaya Links approach is distinctively different from the retreat-based approach of the preceding two cases (PCR and AEE), its case report follows a slightly different format. It begins with a description of field access and application of methods peculiar to the case, and then describes in order: the origins and leadership of the organization; its mission, vision, values, and goals; program activity/business model; and its programmatic approach to empowerment and reconciliation. Emergent themes from analysis of the data at Gahaya Links were few in number and therefore the findings section is divided into only two sections, including: economic and sociopolitical empowerment; and reconciliation and unity. Next, a discussion of political considerations in regards to Gahaya Links is provided, followed by a brief case summary of Gahaya Links.

#### *Field Access and Application of Methods (GL)*

I did not become aware of Gahaya Links until November of 2008, relatively late in my field research. At the time, I was accompanying friends from the Business Council for Peace (BPeace) to the Nyamata genocide memorial, and on the way out of town, we passed by the Gifted Hands Innovation Center of Gahaya Links, which is one of BPeace's partners.<sup>161</sup> I was immediately taken by the setting of Gahaya Links as soon as I walked through the front gate. In a building off to the left of the compound, I could hear what sounded like a hundred women laughing uproariously. My friends and I laughed along with them (not knowing at what) and proceeded to the building directly in front of us, where we were warmly greeted with hugs and broad smiles by the two founders of Gahaya Links, Joy Ndungutse and Janet Nkubana. On the

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<sup>160</sup> Interviews with Gahaya Links leaders Janet Nkubana and Joy Ndungutse, in Kigali, Rwanda on January 7 and 11, 2009.

<sup>161</sup> BPeace is based in New York, with offices in Kigali and Kabul, Afghanistan. BPeace believes "the path to peace is lined with good jobs. [They] work with entrepreneurs in conflict-affected countries to scale their businesses, create significant employment for all, and to expand the economic power of women." Their motto is simply, "more jobs mean less violence." For more information, see <http://www.bpeace.org>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

walls all around us were many beautifully designed baskets and traditional artwork on display. After some light chatter between my BPeace friends, Joy, and Janet, we were given a brief tour of the site. Back in the direction of all the laughter, we were shown a dormitory that can sleep up to 60 women and a large kitchen and dining area (from whence the uproarious laughter had come). On the far end of the compound we strolled through the storage and shipping facility. And back behind the central building (where the baskets were on display in the office), there was a large room with vibrantly painted walls, where on that day twenty or so women sat straight-legged on mats on the floor weaving. Each of them was holding a tiny brightly colored item, with a fluff of sisal coming out one end and bright spools of thread cast about on the floor. Their chatter was light and constant and frequently punctuated by laughter, but they were intently focused on the weaving in their hands.<sup>162</sup>

As we watched the weavers working, Joy explained to them *Kinyarwanda* that we were visitors from BPeace, to which they responded with laughter and clapping, thanking us for coming. Joy encouraged them to get up and do a dance for us, which they appeared to do quite readily.<sup>163</sup> We joined in at their behest (as they physically pulled us into the dance), thus touching off another round of uproarious laughter. This initial visit to Gahaya links was only a casual one for me, as I was simply accompanying my friends from BPeace. But when the conversation turned to my reasons for being in Rwanda and I told Joy and Janet that I was in Rwanda researching non-governmental organizations involved in reconciliation, Janet said, “Then you have to come back and speak to these women!” I indicated I very well might, and my friends and I were soon on our way to the Nyamata memorial.

Due to other research demands and Christmas holiday closures, I did not return to Gahaya Links until nearly two months later, when I visited twice with Joy to learn more about the organization and explore opportunities for further research. On the first visit, moments after

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<sup>162</sup> Data from fieldnotes, November 9, 2008.

<sup>163</sup> Such a greeting by a group of women to visitors from Western countries is not unusual. There are many songs and dances that are well known to most Rwandans, and it seems it only takes one person beginning for the rest to accompany.

Joy and I settled into a conversation, the buyer for Gahaya Links' Macy's contract arrived. He promptly interrupted our conversation and proceeded to provide his thoughts about the products on display on the walls of the office; give feedback on what would sell and what wouldn't; and make specific requests for what he would like to see more or less of. Overall, he expressed great admiration for the Gahaya Links' products, and Joy and he displayed an easy familiarity with each other, full of jokes about how Joy was working "like a donkey" while he was off traveling at his leisure. Although this meeting was interrupted frequently, Joy continually returned to the topics of our conversation. Eventually we agreed the office was too busy for a real conversation and arranged for me to return several days later. When I returned four days later, I learned much more about how Gahaya Links operates and we arranged for me to interview some women weavers in the next week.<sup>164</sup>

The following week, I returned with one of my translators (a Tutsi returnee male) and individually interviewed eight "master weavers" on site for about half an hour each. As this particular day was also the normal day for quality-control and new product order negotiations, I was able to observe those processes first hand and compare them to the way they had been described to me by Joy.<sup>165</sup> Joy implored me to visit one of the cooperatives to "talk to the women there" and since there was a cooperative president right there before me and she was amenable to a visit, she and I (through Joy's translation) arranged for me to come see her women weavers the next week in a rural area near Gitarama.<sup>166</sup>

The following week, the same male Tutsi translator and I took a series of transports (the last half hour by motorcycle taxi over single lane tracks) to a remote village, where a group of

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<sup>164</sup> Data from fieldnotes for January 7 and 11, 2009.

<sup>165</sup> I took notes on the process of quality control and product order negotiations, and especially on the nature of the interaction between Joy and the president of a particular cooperative, which was translated from Kinyarwanda to English by my translator and by Joy. Relations between Joy and the cooperative president appeared to be very positive and affectionate. They both told me stories about the other, lightly teasing each other (data from fieldnotes, January 16, 2009).

<sup>166</sup> Located in the southern Province of Rwanda, Gitarama is a large sprawling town, and many associated rural areas lie outside of it. The name of village and cooperative is not provided for the sake of confidentiality.

twelve to fifteen women were just beginning to assemble for a weaving session. They debated whether indoors or outdoors was better and opted for outdoors, laying out eight or nine grass mats and spreading themselves and various materials out on them. Because they were industriously weaving and we all jokingly agreed that “time is money,” my translator and I first interviewed the women as a group, and then interviewed two women individually.<sup>167</sup> Holding one big group interview and only two short individual interviews at that location may have had some impact on the depth of the interviews, but it also seemed to create a casual atmosphere and comfortable conversation, where one woman’s reflection on a question would stimulate other related reflections.<sup>168</sup> At their request, I took some pictures and short video of the women weaving, and showed the shots around to them, but apart from using them to prompt my memory I did not analyze photographs or videos.

Several days later, I visited Joy Ndungutse again at the Kigali headquarters to check in on what I had learned from the women in the group near Gitarama.<sup>169</sup> This visit provided occasion for me to check my understanding of certain details with Joy (e.g., whether the colored thread is provided free or at cost to the weavers), as well as for her to respond to the impressions I had formed from observing and interviewing the women. As it was a Saturday, and there were no other people in the Gahaya Links office at this time, this particular interview with Joy was the most relaxed yet and gave us both occasions to reflect on experiences that had shaped us as women.<sup>170</sup> I did inquire about documentation I might use for my research, but at the time Gahaya Links had nothing in the way of promotional materials, and I was not comfortable asking

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<sup>167</sup> Fortuitously, I interviewed both the youngest (age 20) and the oldest (age 54) members of this particular cooperative. The women agreed (after discussion) that the longest distance any one member lived from their meeting place was 30 minutes. The cooperative president put the number of members at 101. Members meet twice weekly for weaving together. When I visited them, they were working on small “charms” (black and white) for Starbucks, an order they thought would take about 1.5 months to fulfill (data from fieldnotes and interviews on January 21, 2009).

<sup>168</sup> My translator and I agreed the conversation often went on between the women rather than in response to our questions (data from fieldnotes, January 21, 2009).

<sup>169</sup> After the very first meeting, Janet Nkubana was either not present or unavailable for interviews during my visits.

<sup>170</sup> Data from fieldnotes, January 24, 2009.

to review organizational files. However, Gahaya Links has appeared in a number of articles and press releases by international business and development organizations (as shown previously in footnoted material) and Joy mentioned one or two of them to me. By the time I performed data analysis back in the US, Gahaya Links' website was up and running, and quite a bit more information was available there, including: further detail on organizational background; a listing of partners; the organization's mission, vision, values, and goals; a catalog of products; a listing of awards and honors; select biographies of master weavers and the founders; and a short section on the impact of the program.<sup>171</sup>

I visited the Gahaya Links headquarters once more before I left Rwanda in February of 2009. Joy had asked me to help spread the word about Gahaya Links' smaller products (e.g., earrings) that were not under exclusive contract to one of their sellers in the US, and had said she would prepare a set of samples for me to take back.<sup>172</sup> However, the set of samples was not yet prepared, so we arranged for me to come pick them up at her house two days later. Before parting company, we talked some more about her hopes and dreams for the organization and in particular the difficulty of reconciliation in Rwanda.<sup>173</sup> During this last visit to Gahaya Links headquarters, I also observed a session on HIV-AIDS being given to about thirty women by a male leader in the large meeting room at headquarters, while a meal was being prepared for them in the neighboring kitchen. Two days later, I met Joy at her home, and shared a meal with her and her niece (based in the US). Again, we talked about the women of Gahaya Links, the potential for reconciliation that is based on women's empowerment, the political situation in Rwanda, and a number of other topics.<sup>174</sup>

In short, gaining and maintaining access with Gahaya Links was effortless and enjoyable,

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<sup>171</sup> See <http://www.gahayalinks.com>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

<sup>172</sup> I willingly agreed to try spreading the word, as in my opinion Gahaya Links' baskets and similar woven goods are very well made. They are intricate, detailed, solidly constructed, and beautifully designed -- clearly several cuts above locally made baskets in materials and craftsmanship. And with the blend of sisal, sweetgrass, and sometimes banana leaf, their aroma is very pleasant.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Joy Ndungutse in Kigali, Rwanda, on January, 24, 2009.

<sup>174</sup> Data from fieldnotes, January 24 and 26, 2009.

and finding sufficient information was relatively straightforward.<sup>175</sup> Joy in particular seemed to be very interested in sharing the Gahaya Links story and provided ready (and unsupervised) access to the weavers. She appeared to share freely her thoughts and dreams, and openly acknowledged our shared challenges as women. Had Gahaya Links not surfaced so late in my fieldwork period, I might have collected more data, although the data I had presented no notable inconsistencies. For a summary of data collected and analyzed for Gahaya Links, see Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Sources of Data for Gahaya Links**

<b>Interviews with Basic Demographic Information</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Documents/Visual Data</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Rwanda-based founders (several times with one): both female</li> <li>• 8 “Master Weavers” (one each): all female</li> <li>• 1 group of 12-15 rural weavers: (3 hour interview with all): all female</li> <li>• 2 weavers in rural location: (1/2 hour each): both female</li> <li>• 1 non-GL weaver who chose not to join (once): female Tutsi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headquarters, shipping facility, training center in Kigali</li> <li>• Groups of women weaving at HQ and remote location.</li> <li>• Negotiation of new contracts and quality control</li> <li>• Interaction with Macy’s buyer.</li> <li>• HIV-AIDS training given to members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Multiple articles about GL by third parties.</li> <li>• Photos and video of women</li> </ul>

**Note:** Age of all persons over 62 years of age are indicated with > 62 y.o. to distinguish persons who would have been young adults during critical events of 1959-1962.

### *Origins and Leadership (GL)*

Gahaya Links was founded by two sisters, Joy Ndungutse and Janet Nkubana, and is named after the clan of their origin (IFC, 2008). The sisters are “old caseload returnees” from Uganda, and both of them speak of the profound effect the deprivation of the refugee condition

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<sup>175</sup> However, confirming or closing gaps in information gathered in Rwanda was difficult once back in the US. While relations are very friendly and positive with Joy and with her niece in the US, contact with them has been sporadic and unreliable.



had on them.<sup>176</sup> In particular the plight of women impacted them, which they both identify as their main motive for helping Rwandan women recover in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.<sup>177</sup> By late 1994, Joy had been living in the US for fifteen years, while Janet had returned to Rwanda from Uganda. Rwanda was in desperate straits in 1994, and as a hotel manager in the capital city of Kigali, Janet was faced with many desperately impoverished women appearing at her hotel in search of food or other assistance, or for clients for their woven baskets. She first attempted to convince these women to go elsewhere, but then was struck with the idea of opening up a shop in the hotel where the baskets could be sold (Hunger Project, 2008; IFC, 2008). Eventually she began exporting some of these baskets to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Creative and Innovative Economy Center, n.d.). She also brought some baskets to sell at flea markets and similar venues whenever visiting her sister in the US, where they sold very well (IFC, 2008). Joy in particular had taken to her mother's and older sister's craft of weaving baskets, so she knew many traditional designs that could be used.<sup>178</sup> The sisters eventually decided to form a company to export the baskets more formally, using their own savings and an award from a World Bank business plan competition (IFC, 2008). Starting with twenty-seven women weavers in Gitarama, Gahaya Links was founded in 2003 and incorporated in 2004 (IFC, 2008).<sup>179</sup>

As Joy described to me, she and her sister knew well the high quality demanded in the US and European markets, and focused their efforts on improving the quality and design of the

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<sup>176</sup> Data from interviews with Joy Ndungutse in Kigali, Rwanda on January 7, 11, and 24, 2009; and from profile data on Janet Nkubana (The Hunger Project, 2008; IFC, 2008; and Brody, 2009).

<sup>177</sup> Data from interviews with Joy Ndungutse in Kigali, Rwanda on January 7, 11, and 24, 2009. Janet Nkubana is quoted as saying upon receiving the Africa Prize for The Hunger Project (2008): "[This prize] says that a girl who spent her childhood in a refugee camp can grow up to become a woman who can make a real difference!... You see, I myself grew up in a refugee camp. Every single day, I saw people suffer from hunger. I saw people die from hunger... after the genocide, hunger was everywhere... it was so hard to see people beg. It was so hard to see my sisters suffer with no dignity."

<sup>178</sup> Data from interviews with Joy Ndungutse on Jan 7, 11, and 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda. At Gahaya Links today, Joy is the primary designer of products, working closely with master weavers on new designs, basket shapes and fashion. Janet manages Gahaya Links partnerships, speeches, and the more public face of Gahaya Links.

<sup>179</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on Jan 7, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda. Joy moved back to Rwanda from the US for the Gahaya Links project.

baskets for the export market. Through a few interested parties, Gahaya Links began to gain media coverage in the US.<sup>180</sup> Their fortunes changed dramatically when representatives of the East and Central African Trade Hub delegation (funded through US Agency for International Development's East Africa office) met Janet Nkubana at a trade show in Kigali, and "realized the company's potential" (USAID, 2009). The delegation provided technical assistance and sponsorship for Janet to travel to the US for trade shows, where buyers from Macy's struck a deal to exclusively import Gahaya Links baskets to the US, thus touching off an expansion of the business to what amounted to \$300,000 in annual revenue by 2007 (USAID, 2009). Gahaya Links currently works in partnership with a number of national and international agencies, including the Government of Rwanda, the Rwanda Development Board, the Rwanda Private Sector Foundation, the African Development Foundation, and UNIFEM. It has trade relationships with Fairwinds Trading, Inc, Macy's, Inc, Starbucks, Oprah Winfrey's O magazine, and many smaller business concerns.<sup>181</sup> In the NGO sector, it partners with a number of foundations and development assistance organizations, including Family Health International.<sup>182</sup> It has been recognized nationally and internationally for its innovation, transparency in business practices, and social responsibility.<sup>183</sup>

Thus, there is a lot of favorable press about Gahaya Links both nationally and internationally; from the business and governmental communities, but also from parties

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<sup>180</sup> For example, In 2003, Marie Claire magazine published a story about Rwanda's "peace baskets," which Willa Shalit (a producer of "The Vagina Monologues" and Founder of FairWinds Trading, Inc.) saw as an opportunity to get involved. "What struck me," she told the New York Times, "was that these women who'd suffered so horribly-- who'd been raped, machete-hacked and watched their children get killed -- had created this object that was so exquisite and elegant, with tiny, even stitches." The fact that the weaving groups included both Hutus and Tutsis, heightened the appeal. "I thought, what an incredible embodiment of reconciliation" (IFC, 2008, p. 9).

<sup>181</sup> For a current listing of all partnerships, see Gahaya Links website: <http://www.gahayalinks.com/partners>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

<sup>182</sup> Also Kind World Foundation, The SEVEN Fund, Pioneers of Prosperity, Itafari, The Hunger Site Network, The Hunger Project, One World Projects, Family Health International, Sager Family Foundation, and SameSky. See Gahaya Links website: <http://www.gahayalinks.com/partners>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

<sup>183</sup> Awards received include: Best Taxpayer of the Year (Rwanda Revenue Authority, 2006); Gold Exporter of the Year (Rwanda Development Board, 2008); Best Corporate Social Responsibility (2008); Legatum Pioneers of Prosperity Winner (2008); Employer Award (Ministry of Labor, 2009); and the Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger (The Hunger Project, 2008). See Gahaya Links website: <http://www.gahayalinks.com/about-us/key-achievements>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

interested in the role of women's empowerment and/or post-conflict reconciliation.

### *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals (GL)*

Extracting directly from the new Gahaya Links' website, the mission of Gahaya Links is "to weave *lasting peace* by providing skills which create economic opportunities for the women and men of Rwanda, one person, one family, one village at a time" (emphasis added). The vision statement reads: "At Gahaya Links, we believe that women's economic empowerment provides the foundation for achieving sustainable peace and development in Rwanda. Our model revolves around this belief, going beyond fair trade to create jobs and improve the quality of life for women (and men) living in Rwanda's most challenging socio-economic environments."<sup>184</sup>

The stated values guiding Gahaya's work are:

- Commitment to Sustainable Practices (i.e., fair wages, provision of services and training, encouragement of personal growth and development)
- Commitment to Quality (i.e., innovation, superior craftsmanship)
- Customer Service
- Accountability
- Team Work (i.e., working to achieve a common goal while respecting others' backgrounds).<sup>185</sup>

Finally, Gahaya's stated goals include: "Social responsibility, market leadership, and operation efficiency."<sup>186</sup>

### *Program Activity/ Business Model (GL)*

As its mission, vision, values, and goals reflect, Gahaya Links aims to promote women's empowerment and lasting peace. It attempts to do so through the running of an excellent business, which is both commercially successful and socially responsible. In the words of Joy

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<sup>184</sup> See <http://www.gahayalinks.com/about-us/mission-and-vision>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

<sup>185</sup> See <http://www.gahayalinks.com/about-us/our-values>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

<sup>186</sup> See <http://www.gahayalinks.com/about-us/our-goals>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

Ndungutse, Gahaya Links attempts to promote reconciliation *through* empowerment.<sup>187</sup>

Therefore, the business model of Gahaya Links is discussed first, beginning with the recruitment of members and formation of cooperatives and then describing the way in which the business operates. After considering the business model of Gahaya Links, its overall approach towards empowerment and reconciliation can be more easily viewed.

### *Recruitment of Members and Formation of Cooperatives*

Before Gahaya Links began to organize women into a country-wide system of cooperatives, women weavers typically worked on their own. Each woman would sell her baskets to a sort of middleman (*abamami*), who would sell them in tourist locations in Kigali.<sup>188</sup> To bring the women together into cooperatives required going into the villages and asking local leaders for women who were weaving baskets.<sup>189</sup> Gahaya Links was especially seeking women who were weaving traditional baskets such as the *agaseke* basket.<sup>190</sup> Bringing women weavers together for a meeting posed the first of challenges, as there was deep and enduring mistrust after the genocide.<sup>191</sup> But Gahaya Links brought them together with the promise of training them in better techniques and offering much more money per basket. Once Gahaya Links had brought together one group, each woman was asked to invite two or three other weavers to the next

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<sup>187</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>188</sup> Data from interviews with Gitarama-based cooperative on January 21, 2009; also interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>189</sup> Data from interviews with Gitarama-based cooperative president and Joy Ndungutse on January 16, 2009 in Kigali Rwanda.

<sup>190</sup> Traditional baskets served many purposes in Rwandan history, such as for the passing of messages between friends, storing grain or as lids on gourds of milk, or as packages for small gifts. They can be small enough to put a sales check inside (as many restaurants do today) or large enough for a small child to fit inside, and are often given as gifts for weddings and christenings (data from visit to Rwanda's National Museum in Butare, and the Nyanza Natural History Museum in Nyanza [both in Rwanda]). According to the Gahaya Links website, the traditional *agaseke* basket, with its zig-zag design, is meant to portray two friends walking together along the path of life and visiting neighboring villages along the way. Today these are marketed as "peace baskets" and the zig-zag is meant to signify the road to healing and peace. See <http://www.gahayalinks.com/products-development/weaving/96-weaving-history>: "The new Rwandan coat of arms has at its center one of these beautiful handcrafted baskets symbolizing a future filled with hope - the weaving together of a formerly divided nation into a new and unified Rwanda."

<sup>191</sup> Data from interviews with Joy Ndungutse, and nearly every interview throughout January of 2009.

meeting.<sup>192</sup> This ensured some degree of ethnic mixing, although the Gahaya Links leadership did not make that aim explicit.<sup>193</sup> Initially, women were concerned that if too many joined, there would be no market for their goods, but Joy and Janet assured them that if and when the quality of the baskets improved, the markets would follow.<sup>194</sup> As local groups of 20-30 women formed, multiple groups were brought together to form cooperatives (each with 50-200 members).

As the Rwandan government has actively promoted the formation of cooperatives throughout Gahaya Links' history, Gahaya Links cooperatives are still being formed, although not at the previous rate. Importantly, Gahaya Links only makes contracts for product orders with cooperatives, thus providing a strong incentive for women weavers to organize themselves into cooperatives.<sup>195</sup> As the cooperatives have formed over time, some have lacked specialized training (e.g., bookkeeping), while others have lacked spaces for the women to meet and weave. Gahaya Links has assisted such cooperatives until they could find their own means to do so.<sup>196</sup> Each cooperative elects its own president, secretary, and treasurer, with the only requirement from Gahaya Links being that they have to be literate. Rwandan elections are notoriously public, with persons simply lining up behind the candidate they vote for, so Gahaya Links leaders have done some coaching with cooperatives in need of help in selecting the most qualified candidates.<sup>197</sup>

### *Business Operations*

The President of each cooperative negotiates directly with Joy at Gahaya Links on product orders and pricing, and brings the cooperative's finished products to the production

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<sup>192</sup> Each cooperative member pays an entry fee of approximately \$10 to join, which is then channeled into a personal savings account through the cooperative's treasurer. However, in the one cooperative I visited, only 84 out of 100 members had paid this fee, and women who were unable to pay it were still participating in cooperative activities (data from interview with Gitarama-based cooperative president, January 21, 2009).

<sup>193</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse, January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Data from interviews with Joy Ndungutse and Gitarama-based cooperative president, in January 2009.

<sup>197</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

center in Kigali once a week for payment. As Joy and one cooperative president described to me, some designs are very difficult and require especially gifted weavers: A cooperative is only offered work orders it is viewed as capable of fulfilling with high quality. Every week, finished items for each cooperative's current work order(s) are brought to the Gifted Hands Innovation Center in Kigali, where each weaver's products are examined one-by-one by Ndungutse.<sup>198</sup> Whatever does not meet the strict quality standards is sent back in the same packaging to the weaver, along with payment for the items that meet the standard.<sup>199</sup> As Joy and several of the weavers mentioned to me in interviews, a woven item can take from two hours to two weeks to complete (depending on the size of the piece and the complexity of the design), and therefore the price per item ranges quite a bit. For every item (fetching from \$5-\$25), one dollar must be put into the savings account for that individual by the treasurer of her cooperative.<sup>200</sup>

While cooperative leaders (usually, but not always, the presidents) are in Kigali, they often receive specialized training and coaching in leadership development, which is targeted to the problems they have in the cooperatives (such as concerns about favoritism in orders, and responding to the skill levels of their members).<sup>201</sup> Also during these times, the presidents buy the raw materials that Gahaya Links imports and sells to the cooperatives at cost (such as colored silks for certain designs).<sup>202</sup> All cooperative presidents have cell phones provided by Gahaya Links, which received a grant for the cell phones.<sup>203</sup> Provision of cell phones to cooperative presidents is intended to allow better communication throughout the organization, which

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<sup>198</sup> Data from fieldnotes, January 16, 2009. Each basket has a tag with the weaver's name on it, while smaller items such as charms or earrings are in plastic bags with each woman's name pinned to them. Clearly, this requires a degree of trust in the cooperative leader (normally the president) who carries the product to Kigali, and carries the payment back to the weavers.

<sup>199</sup> Data from fieldnotes, January 16, 2009, and confirmed in interview data at Gitarama-based cooperative on January 21, 2009.

<sup>200</sup> Creative and Innovative Economy Center (n.d.). Also confirmed in interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 16, 2009, in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>201</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>202</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda and from interview with Gitarama-based cooperative president on January 21, 2009.

<sup>203</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

certainly appears to have been successful from field observations.

When new designs or techniques are developed (almost always by Joy) or new product orders are made by buyers like Macy's, Joy brings all the "master weavers" from the cooperatives that are handling that order to the Gifted Hands Innovation Center in Kigali.<sup>204</sup> Depending on the complexity of the design and/or technique and what other activities are planned, the weavers may stay at the Center for two to three weeks. Quality control is constantly applied, so that when they return to their cooperatives, they are well skilled in the design(s) and can effectively teach them to others.<sup>205</sup> At other times of the year, up to 60 new members at a time are brought to the Gifted Hands Innovation Center for training in weaving, but also for workshops provided by Gahaya Links' partners on topics such as proper hygiene; personal finance (especially savings); HIV-AIDS prevention; domestic violence; and reconciliation. For reconciliation in particular, Gahaya Links partners with government providers of reconciliation training, and usually sends all the weavers to the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center.<sup>206</sup>

Finally, Gahaya Links expends some energy to make sure their products are not copied and/or sold elsewhere. They negotiate exclusive contracts on designs with their clients (most notably Macy's). They have a memorandum of understanding with each cooperative that Gahaya Links designs will not be sold to other parties, and designs are at times intentionally intricate so that they cannot be copied by non-members at home or abroad.<sup>207</sup> Gahaya Links also plays a strong role in putting local pressure on the Rwandan government to free restrictions and

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<sup>204</sup> "The Gifted Hands Innovation Center" was set up in 2007 after Joy and Janet realized the impracticality of training master weavers throughout the country (data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda).

<sup>205</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse and informal conversation with Macy's buyer on January 7, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

unnecessary delays on imports of raw materials (such as silk), and exports of their products abroad.<sup>208</sup>

*Programmatic Approach to Empowerment and Reconciliation (GL)*

As the description of Gahaya Links' business model shows, there are several ways in which Gahaya Links aims to promote women's empowerment *and* inter-ethnic reconciliation, although the latter appears to be viewed as an outcome of the former, as was confirmed for me by Joy.<sup>209</sup> To promote Rwandan women's empowerment, Gahaya Links intentionally recruits the neediest women living in rural areas. It not only teaches them the skills to produce high quality goods, but offers low-priced raw materials and guarantees high-priced sales of their goods in foreign markets. Where a woman would have normally made 150 Rwandan Francs (FRw), or about 35 cents, for a traditional flat basket before Gahaya Links, they now make 3000 FRw (about six dollars) for a Gahaya Links basket taking only slightly more time.<sup>210</sup> The system of compulsory personal savings is intended to help women and their families get out of poverty, and thus reduce their dependence on male family members, community members, or on "handouts."<sup>211</sup> Cooperative leaders receive a variety of training in leadership development and cooperative skills, as well as the supplementary trainings all trainees at the Gifted Hands Innovation Center receive in personal health, financial management, social well-being, and reconciliation matters.

Also important are the relationships weavers have with Gahaya Links leadership, especially with Joy.<sup>212</sup> Joy says she maintains an "open door" policy with her weavers, and

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<sup>208</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda. Rwanda ranks poorly in ease of export measures, and Janet Nkubana advises the Rwandan government on simplification of exporting procedures (IFC, 2008).

<sup>209</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse on January 21, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>210</sup> Data from a number of interviews with women weavers, January 16 and 21, 2009 in Kigali and near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>211</sup> Data from interview of Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>212</sup> There did appear to be a somewhat more distanced and hierarchical relationship between Janet Nkubana and the women weavers, although data were insufficient to confirm or deny the perceived quality of that relationship. The



encourages them to pursue other entrepreneurial interests if they have passions they want to follow -- even if that takes them away from Gahaya Links. Indeed, when observing her interaction with cooperative presidents during the quality control process, I perceived her relationships with them to be mutually respectful, warm, and filled with laughter and light personal teasing.<sup>213</sup> In her conversations with me, she enthusiastically recounted stories of individual women setting up other businesses with the money they made through Gahaya Links, and spoke of how they also drive her to do more:

Actually, the women are my drive, because I know if I can't sit down and think and come up with new designs, they will really have something to say. So they really drive me. That's the best. And I drive them too. They know it, they know if I get an order and they say I want this...the client wants this, do you think we can do it? We sit down and discuss it and then we see if we can do it.<sup>214</sup>

At the same time, Joy appeared to be sensitive to pushing the women to learn at a pace faster than they can handle. Providing an example, she spoke of the need to be patient with the way women elected cooperative leaders, helping them to see the importance of literacy rather than just telling them not to run elections in the customary manner.<sup>215</sup>

Thus, Gahaya Links attempts to support women's empowerment and advancement in Rwanda through both direct and indirect mechanisms and manners of operation. In contrast, in the area of reconciliation Gahaya Links' efforts seem to be markedly less direct. Although the rate of new cooperative formation at Gahaya Links has slowed down, the recruitment process has been and continues to be a critical moment in Gahaya Links' efforts to promote reconciliation. From the moment women are drawn together into the weaving groups, they are meant to be coming together as *women weavers*, regardless of their ethnicity or experience.<sup>216</sup> Because it

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focus of Janet on external relations and Joy on internal relations (as described to me in interviews with Joy) may explain the perceived difference in relationship quality.

<sup>213</sup> Data from fieldnotes, January 16, 2009. Many parts of ongoing conversation were translated to me by my translator and then noted in my field journal.

<sup>214</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda..

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 7, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

begins with local leaders (normally men), this initial recruitment could potentially draw an ethnically (or otherwise) disproportionate group of women. But with the next round of recruitment (when they each invite two or three new members) and every round thereafter, plus the eventual merging of small groups into larger cooperatives, some blending of ethnicities is assured. By engaging women in skills acquisition and income-generation, Gahaya links tries to attract and retain *all* women weavers, which must include those who may be reluctant to join a mixed group for any other reason than economic necessity.<sup>217</sup> These women go on to work in the same groups together on a regular basis, although the only formal programming they receive regarding reconciliation is when they are in Kigali for training. There, they receive workshops on reconciliation delivered by government partners, and usually visit the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center.<sup>218</sup>

However, at times direct and unplanned interventions in the area of reconciliation are required, according to several stories recounted to me by Joy in my interviews with her, and confirmed in some of the interviews with women weavers. For example, Joy told the story of a group of genocide survivors in training just the previous week:

The other day we had a group of people who were genocide survivors [and] children heading households. All of a sudden they were starting to cry, they started jumping over, all over the place, because they were saying someone has come to kill us, they were traumatized. During the day! Here in the center. Because when one starts, everybody does, and they will hurt themselves, so we brought in the counselors to come and start counseling them. These are young people who lost their parents, they are from [name of town deleted], where they built houses for them to live. Because something can trigger that and...it will take a long time. It really, it really put me off completely, for a whole week I was like blank. Every time that I go through that it pushes me back. It's so hard you know, to believe that it really happened here. But then you look at these young people, and they saw it. Some were raped, some were even raped. Actually, I really want to really hang on to this group. I want them to see how can they, I mean how can they just live a decent life? And I go to visit them too. I go out a lot, I have like a week to tour. Talk to them because they send messages we want to see you, we haven't seen

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<sup>217</sup> Indeed, this is a reason frequently cited for women joining the cooperative. Data from several interviews conducted in January of 2009 indicate that many women joined because they felt it was their only opportunity to make a living.

<sup>218</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 7, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

you for a whole week. (In response to a question) Do they think of me as a mother? Yes, they do.<sup>219</sup>

It is not uncommon in Rwanda for individuals or groups of people to be reminded of or “retraumatized” by memories of violent events, whether by attendance at the *gacaca*, viewing a genocide memorial, seeing a known killer in the streets, or any number of other precipitating events. Although I did not witness this occurring with any Gahaya Links group, it was mentioned by several interviewees as an occasional occurrence which required discussion and sometimes intervention by Gahaya Links leaders. This study’s data on the quality of such interventions is lacking, although the approach taken by the leaders (as described to me by Joy) is to focus on the unifying elements of Rwandan identity, and to emphasize moving on from the events of the past.<sup>220</sup> More on this topic is discussed below in the *Findings* section.

### *Findings (GL)*

The coding of the interviews and observational data from Gahaya Links led to the emergence of a number of themes; some arose unexpectedly from expressions heard over and over again (e.g. from being “overlooked” to having “oil for my skin,” as described below), while others were shaped by the literature in transformational learning (specifically empowerment) or reconciliation. All themes fell into one of two broad thematic categories: economic and sociopolitical empowerment; and reconciliation and unity. Although these two broad thematic categories were inextricably linked, in most respects the women’s expressions about empowerment were more confident, concrete, and consistent than their reflections on reconciliation and unity. Therefore, the set of themes falling within the broader thematic category of economic and sociopolitical empowerment are discussed first, followed by a considerably less thematic discussion in the broader category of reconciliation and unity.

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<sup>219</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

### *Economic and Sociopolitical Empowerment*

A number of themes demonstrated changes in the women's sense of their own power and agency to shape their own lives and communities, both economically and socio-politically. The women I interviewed never clearly made a distinction between economic gains and sociopolitical gains, although in the telling of each story the former (i.e., economic gain) was always associated with and followed by the latter (i.e., sociopolitical gain). Accordingly, themes are presented in a sequential manner reflecting quite literally the order in which many of the women told their stories, although the data provided is not only from interviews. As all themes represent improvements, they are named for the area in which improvement was perceived by the women, including: livelihoods of women and families; family dynamics and social roles; self-esteem -- from "overlooked" to having "oil for my skin"; and sociopolitical status.

*Livelihoods of women and families.* The economic gains of being a weaver for a Gahaya Links cooperative are plain to see. Whereas before many weavers would have lived on about one US dollar a week, they may now make as much as \$14 a week -- while weaving much higher quality baskets. This additional income is particularly crucial for sufferers of HIV-AIDS, who often have insufficient energy to make their living raising crops (Creative and Innovative Economy Center, n.d.). Rather than taking whatever price the middleman (*abamami*) would pay, the guarantee of a fixed price and regular orders to fill allows women to plan for longer term expenditures, as does the compulsory savings plan. And because women's livelihoods are so bound up with the livelihoods of their families, almost always the women explain their economic gains in terms of what they are now able to do for their families. For example, Marie, the young President of the cooperative near Gitarama:

Before I started working with Gahaya, as you can see with these dirty kids (gesturing to some very dirty kids nearby), I never even used to afford soap. I could not even afford to buy soap for my kids. I ate very poorly, absolutely. Because of my poor feeding my first kid had kwashiorkor [protein deficiency]. I was very poor, and everybody overlooked me -- sincerely, truly. I could not even have one thousand [\$2] a week. But when the weaving came to this place, I used to work very hard and afford nine thousand at least a week. I would go to Gitarama with my baskets and come back with a lot of beans, and

greens, and everything. I even employed somebody to plant for me so that I can do only the weaving. You know I was feeling so well, I began feeling well and after that I began producing very healthy kids....there were some that wanted to destroy our initiatives, but now instead we are teaching them how to weave (laughing)...what Gahaya Links has done to my family is beyond your imagination. It's beyond what you can imagine. I never even used to have a rabbit in my home. But now I've got goats, I've got a cow, I bought a bicycle for my husband, I bought a telephone for him! (laughing). I did not feel comfortable having a mobile phone, and my husband every time having to borrow and borrow it!<sup>221</sup>

Lisbeth, a mother of four, tells a similar story:

My husband and myself, and our youngest child, we have AIDS. We have received ARV [anti retroviral drugs] from a program sponsored by the government also and some help from our families. We could not work because of the illness and we had no money even to buy clothes or to send the children to school. After I learned to weave at Gahaya Links, I am able to sell them [baskets] at a good price. Now we can afford food, medicine, and send our children to school. We have family health insurance and a good roof on our house. We have even saved some money because they keep us in savings. I have even trained my husband to weave baskets so he can also earn money... With this weaving, our family has found hope again.<sup>222</sup>

Indeed, better livelihoods for women and their families was mentioned by every single interviewee in this study. More references to better livelihoods for women and their families are also embedded within the passages offered in the following sections.

*Family dynamics and social roles.* In such a strongly patriarchal culture as Rwanda's, notable increases in the income-earning capacity of women were not always welcomed, especially at first. Several women in the large group I interviewed near Gitarama mentioned that the early stages of their weaving brought some conflict between men and women. For example, Beatrice discusses that issue in general:

And those who weave, because they can afford some things in their families, when the men begin talking about these things, they say why isn't your wife weaving so that she can afford a beer for you? They begin gossiping and saying I'm going to buy for my wife the *agitenge* so she can weave also...and all that causes conflict between men and women (laughing)...These things happened and in the beginning the women who were weavers,

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<sup>221</sup> Data from interview with Gitarama-based cooperative on January 21, 2009.

<sup>222</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 near Gitarama, Rwanda.

their men would ask them for their money and go drink their money in the bar. But now it is different, the men assist and support the weavers, so that they can get more money.<sup>223</sup>

Several women spoke of their husbands being drawn into the business or sharing more in household chores to free the women up for more weaving. Joy had told me of this beforehand, saying, “So, then the husbands were saying, ‘What!? The women are becoming richer than us.’ So, now the husbands are growing the sisal to save for their needs to give to their wives.”<sup>224</sup> One among the women I interviewed as a group near Gitarama, Anneta, spoke of the shift in family dynamics in her household:

Before I was just a casual laborer in the fields, the plantations. I used to be hired for people who needed me to dig for them. I was only being paid two hundred francs [\$40], from morning to midday. And from that two hundred francs, I could buy soap and salt, but miss kerosene. My life was really hopeless...because I could not live on two hundred francs. But when I began weaving (laughs) it really changed. Because I can afford, let alone for myself, but I can even pay for the small kid to go to school. The other thing is that men have learned the value of this weaving business. For example, in the beginning when we used to make money, they would fight for it and they wanted to take it away from us by force, but now they realize that out of this money we are doing many important things for the family...even beyond the general needs. Now, sometimes when I am weaving, my husband goes in and starts the fire for dinner!<sup>225</sup>

Anneta’s story of her husband lighting the cooking fire caused quite a long session of laughter and teasing in the group, and there were many later references to her story.<sup>226</sup> In another story of this kind, Marie, the young cooperative president, describes:

This is a very big step for us because some of us are now able to pay school fees for our children, and we are able bodied women in front of our men. To be able to provide something in front of the family...earlier we women used to depend on the men to provide everything. There was a lot of poverty, a lot of poverty in the homes and now with this [income] there’s not this kind of anger in the family, the kind of anger and pain that comes from poverty, when people are always having that kind of rage that comes

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>225</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>226</sup> Data from fieldnotes and from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

from people not being able to sustain themselves, that causes instability in the family, which emanates from poverty, the inability to provide or to get something for yourself.<sup>227</sup>

This “anger in the family” may well have been a reference to domestic violence, which no woman at Gahaya Links ever mentioned directly to me, but which Joy told me is often reduced in families with weaving women.<sup>228</sup> Janet Nkubana also notes the impact of weaving on spousal relations: “Women weavers tell me that, because of their weaving and the income they now bring in, their husbands treat them with more respect” (Creative and Innovative Economy Center, n.d.). At more length, Joy described how important empowerment is in reducing the abuse of women:

One part of my objective is to make sure that women are not treated like trash. You know this abusing women, it was because they didn't have anything, they [had] no income, so they were just at their husband's mercy. When I was growing up, I could see it in African men's behavior, how the women were treated....So, I [say] to them once you have your savings, the men will not harass you, nobody is going to abuse you any more, because you are not begging anything from him....I said you have to empower yourself . You have to know what you want in life and you have to say no when you don't think it is right...but you can't say no when you are not providing anything...you have no security. So, one woman, you should have heard [her] story. I can't believe she said, “Oh, the other night the man was talking and I said just shut up!”...I see these men come here to say hello to the women. And I ask them, “What are you doing here?” “We have come to say hello,” they say. “We missed my...I missed my wife.” [This] never happened before, and that is something [we] really have achieved...and I can see this is what I wanted, women to be treated equal. Because you know in, in our culture, when a child is not doing well or when a child is a failure, it is the mother's child. But when the child is shining it is the man's child. And *yet* it is the woman who struggles, mmm?<sup>229</sup>

*Self-esteem: from being “overlooked” to having “oil for my skin.”* The impact of economic empowerment on the women's sense of self-esteem and self-sufficiency was mentioned in some way by every interviewee, and it was described most frequently as the ability

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<sup>227</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>228</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

to buy “oil for my skin” where she had previously been “overlooked.”<sup>230</sup> Providing perspective on this topic, the oldest woman (at 54) of the cooperative near Gitarama:

In my young age, a young girl’s life was dependent on her family and the only thing she would do is to weave, in order to get some things, like to buy the oil for her skin...so it has really changed nowadays, that most women can afford, they don’t have to depend on their families. It’s a lot. A lot has changed. So, it gives me value, the changes have also brought value. Because when I walk in the streets I feel like I am dressed well and this also creates security. On everything. Because we have something that brings money. So nobody overlooks you. Because you are in a good position.<sup>231</sup>

One of the weavers I interviewed in Kigali described how her family now views her differently than they would an “old woman” who is unable to afford oil for her own skin:

Yes, it helps me to afford school fees for the children in our home and also to afford good clothes and also good feeding, not to every time be eating potatoes, you see. It changes the way my family looks at me as a person who is able to work instead of being an old woman who cannot afford to buy oil for herself for smearing, or something for the skin...that makes me happy to be able to afford some things.<sup>232</sup>

Another weaver in the group near Gitarama, who was otherwise silent for the interview, entered abruptly into the conversation to add that it was not only about school fees (the running focus of the conversation) but that it was also about looking nice and having oil to put on one’s body:

The first thing is that the big plate, the open thing you know, we used to get 200 francs for that at the local market. When Gahaya Links came, they raised it to 1,500. And now Gahaya Links gives us about 2,500 to 3,000 francs for that plate. So, from that 3,000 or 2,500, I can afford for example, for me personally, to send a child to school and pay school fees in bits until the semester is over. By the end of the term, I have paid all the school fees. But for us women, there is more. It is obvious, we can now afford to buy good clothes and look nice, you know. And to buy oil to put on our bodies.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> The choice of wording by the translator (i.e. “overlooked”) was not examined for accuracy, but as it occurred repetitively, it was taken to mean being unimportant or not valued, if not invisible. Other translators also used this term.

<sup>231</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>232</sup> Data from interview on January 16, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>233</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.



The cooperative president, Marie, noted that even the women's bravery in associating so freely with me was a change in the way they viewed themselves, and she invited me to share my impressions of Africans with them:

Maybe just because these days are changing and most White people are coming to visit and go through this place and other places, but sometimes we feel like that we are brave enough to...associate with the White people and to believe we know them and we have really *met* them. Earlier [in the interview], we were saying how Africans see all White people as rich people with no problems, but how do you look at us? Some kids used to tell us White people can't like us, but I think maybe they can like us (laughing).<sup>234</sup>

*Rising sociopolitical status.* Perhaps not surprisingly, better livelihoods for women and their families, shifting family dynamics and social roles, and increased self-esteem were associated with the women's perceived sense of having gained sociopolitical status as well. Several weavers spoke of the respect for weavers, both as individuals and as a collectivity, rising significantly in the community. For example, Rebecca describes:

Before [Gahaya], if you came to the village you would realize the difference because most of us were very, very, *very* village women. But now, you cannot know that we are village women. And we work together with our man and work as a family and then also participate in various government programs, for example at the [health center], we are always on the top, I mean we weavers we are always on the top in implementing government programs...Earlier on, most men had the attitude of like (stomping ground) stepping on women. That has changed, yes. Now we have value, we have bought property and livestock.<sup>235</sup>

Gaudance also spoke on this topic:

Whenever there is a general meeting in the village and they are discussing some things, and it's for the leadership roles, they easily elect us. When it comes to helping poor people in the village setting, if somebody by mistake mentions a family or somebody who weaves, everybody will yell and say, "They're not poor!" (laughing) So that means [our] social status has risen. So, somebody can come to borrow money from me and I [can] say I have no money, but they wouldn't believe me.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

Finally, the impact of being a weaver on one's desirability for marriage was also mentioned by a couple of women, such as Vivian:

This is not something to waste time on, we know very well that women never had a say in the village because of poverty. But now, since women are able to make money for themselves, everybody is looking at the woman who is able to work. For example, even in the village, if a young man is looking for a woman, they will certainly say we are looking for a woman who is working with the weavers, so that they can support each other. The women nowadays have a lot of money so if you take the woman who does not work (*laughs*) what will she help you with?<sup>237</sup>

In response to this story, the eldest in the group (at 54) described how the weaving cooperatives had impacted a young woman's prospects for marriage:

For a young girl back then, everything depended on the family!...There [was] nothing a young girl would do for herself. But now with this weaving business, things have really changed. Like back then, a girl would go for marriage, and she wouldn't be happy. Because she has nothing... there's nothing that goes with her, there's nothing ceremonious really. But nowadays, some of these young girls, they can even afford to buy phones...now they can afford to do everything for themselves. So, a girl goes for marriage and... would afford her marriage ceremony with the help of the parents and she can contribute to her marriage. So, if you compare the families of people who got married then, and now...there is a difference because back then you are overlooked because you have nothing...but nowadays you can, you have value because you have something to contribute and nobody will overlook you.<sup>238</sup>

### *Reconciliation and Unity*

As mentioned previously, themes in the broader thematic category of reconciliation and unity at Gahaya Links were not easily shaped because the women's reflections on the topic of reconciliation in particular (as opposed to "unity") did not strike me or my translator as confidently expressed, or as concrete, or as consistent within or between individuals as their reflections on empowerment seemed to be.<sup>239</sup> The group of women near Gitarama did appear to speak more freely about the difficulties of reconciliation than the women in Kigali, perhaps

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Data from fieldnotes, January 21 2009.

because they knew each other better than the women in Kigali did, or because the women in Kigali had the leaders of Gahaya Links in neighboring rooms. But even so, the women near Gitarama tended to stay on politically safe ground throughout our interviews, and offered generalities rather than specifics.

Due to the difficulty of bringing interviewee responses regarding reconciliation into a meaningful thematic framework, the following discussion embeds the only theme of note within a more linear consideration of the issues(s) associated with exploring reconciliation at Gahaya Links. It begins with the difficulties of first meetings, i.e., “coming together”; then discusses the only clear theme, “working together as women.” Next, taking the women weavers’ responses alongside the leaders’ statements about reconciliation, the way in which the theme of working together reflects “unity as reconciliation” is considered. The discussion of findings in the broader thematic category of *Reconciliation and Unity* closes with “peculiarities of exploring reconciliation at Gahaya Links,” which may provide some explanation for the women’s seemingly less confident, concrete and consistent expressions of reconciliation.

*Coming together.* Many of the weavers I interviewed in Kigali and in the cooperative near Gitarama mentioned that bringing the women together initially into cooperatives was very difficult, and that joining Gahaya Links pushed them to come together in a way they felt they might not have otherwise, as a young woman named Eugenie described:

It was a very hard time for us to come together, especially that the country was coming out of the genocide. But you know, especially, look at it this way - imagine you sitting there and doing something and another woman is over there, having nothing to do and, she maybe has had a problem with, you know her husband was killed or you maybe took part in the killing. But this doesn't help us to get over that, and it was not very easy to bring the women together, but some of them have managed to form a relationship and it has really helped women and the local leaders have also come in and helped us to understand the value of cooperatives.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda..

Another woman older than Eugenie described it similarly:

After the war...it was not easy after the war, but you know the Hutu and the Tutsi had problems relating after the genocide....for example if it wasn't for this cooperative, if we were in our families, in our homes and we worked in this area and we met somebody like this old woman who maybe I might have had a role in the death of her family, or she had a role in the killing of my family...I wouldn't even greet her. But this cooperative has helped us to come together and relax about some things. Even to dialog again, talk, and to be able to, just the fact of meeting is enough.<sup>241</sup>

Indeed, nearly every interviewee referred to the initial coming together as a very difficult time, although none of them spoke about what that first meeting was like for them personally.

*Working together as women:* The importance of working together as women on economic and social problems proved to be the most commonly expressed term and the single truly coherent theme from the data on Gahaya Links within the broader thematic category of *Reconciliation and Unity*. The fact that such “working together” was always as women at Gahaya Links is stated or implied in the following passages. Reflecting on how critical it was to work together on orders for baskets, Daniela explains:

Look. You have seen us weaving here, and we are making samples and these samples will go back to the village and from the village these women will weave and bring the product here. They are going to weave different colors and different material and different kind of mixtures, and, by that fact that we are even meeting and working together, that is a sign that we, it's a step towards unity, otherwise what value would it be for a woman to sit there and have her problems and sit alone isolated. There is some change at least of her attitude when women meet together, and work together and bring a common product. For example, If I am the master weaver and then I look at myself and I say I have done the master thing, how will I teach others in the village if I do not move out of myself and look at steps of uniting with, working together with others. How would I teach others if I am still locked into such feelings of hatred? What if I'm supposed to teach a hundred women and I only teach ten. How about the ninety? What will happen? And yet the command, the order is for a hundred baskets. So what will happen with the other [ninety]? So, it's an issue that we have to work together and rely on each other and work as a group as a team, without just isolating yourself from others.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Data from interview of weaver on January 16, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

Many of the women noted that working together on social problems common to all women in Rwanda was as important as working together on basket orders. For example, Anonciata describes the importance of support for common issues like AIDS through the Gahaya Links cooperative:

There are really some things that we talk about and everybody raises their own problems at different times, and different problems too. And in different ways they talk about them, but an example I can give is if we, all of us [stayed] in our families nobody would even know about the real issues that some of us are going through like for example when we talk about AIDS. It's, you know it's a problem in this society. With this cooperative we can talk about that issue and even teach others how to go for [medicine] and if some people have been infected with HIV then they can find some kind of help from the group.<sup>243</sup>

Beatrice (hinting that different ethnicities were present with the group near Gitarama) also speaks about how the group members support each other in times of trouble and celebration:

Looking after each other for example if there is a meeting, we all come together. If there is a wedding we all contribute. If there is a problem of insecurity somewhere maybe somebody has been attacked we try to, to rescue the situation....maybe you can see all these women here they represent various groups, and each of them has some problems, and each group resolves some problems and each leader here has her own problems and experiences, but you can see they are working together and it seems like nothing, that there is no problem because people have realized the need of unity and reconciliation and working together.<sup>244</sup>

Zula also refers to the mixing of ethnicities in the Gitarama group, and the importance of working together across differences:

[Referring to ethnicity] We feel, we see that they are like us, however much any one is different -- who they are does not depend on their looks (laughing). There are other things we talk about in general as women, to not be drinking a lot, helping them not become also alcoholic...Or we talk about issues like family problems solving family affairs...and we also try to show the men they are also part of our enterprise and we collaborate with them.

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<sup>243</sup> Data from interview on January 16, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>244</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

Finally, Marie, the president of the cooperative near Gitarama, reflects on how important a sense of belonging among women is to the weavers:

And then, the other thing which I just forgot is that when you look at...women doing this weaving and you're not doing it, you kind of feel that jealousy, you are also wanting to do it. So it helps women to love, to come together and also be like others, which is easy for women, I think, in life. Women always want to be like other women.

*Unity as reconciliation.* The foregoing passages were typical for Gahaya Links members, in that working together on common problems (and especially as women) was expressed in a manner analogous to reconciliation. The term “unity” was used more frequently than “reconciliation,” and when either was used, it referred to the manner in which the women were able to work together on economic and social problems. Such expressions about unity and reconciliation are characteristic of the organization’s formal orientation (as seen in the Mission, Vision, Values and Goals section above) as well as its apparent informal operation. For example, Janet Nkubana stresses the importance of “doing business together” in fostering unity, stating:

Entrepreneurship is part of the answer. I don't care who you are, where you are from, what happened, all I need is business. Among these weavers, I have survivors, I have widows, I have women whose husbands are sitting in prison, but to see them sitting under one roof weaving and doing business together, it is great.<sup>245</sup>

Upon receiving the 2008 Africa Prize from The Hunger Project, Janet described how she has stressed “putting the past behind us” to the women weavers: “I met with them, and I said to them, ‘Don't we breathe the same air? Speak the same language? Don't we all love our children? Let us just weave and try to put the past behind us.’”<sup>246</sup> And although Joy and Janet play quite different roles at Gahaya Links, and their relationships with the women appear to be qualitatively different, when I asked Joy in our initial meeting whether I could interview both

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<sup>245</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, as cited in McClymont (2006).

<sup>246</sup> The Hunger Project (2008).

Hutu and Tutsi women, she exclaimed, “We don't encourage them to talk about that here, we are all one!”<sup>247</sup> Such expressions may be laudable by themselves, but focused as they are on “putting the past behind us” and being “one,” they are more reflective of *unity* than of *reconciliation*, and the distinction is an important one to be discussed in later chapters.

*Peculiarities of exploring reconciliation at Gahaya Links.* There were two peculiarities in exploring reconciliation at Gahaya Links, including: the impersonal and unspecific nature of most (if not all) reflections on reconciliation; and the subtle but nevertheless powerful messages about reconciliation that come from the leadership. Regarding the former, not one of the women weavers I interviewed spoke in personal and/or specific terms about her experiences of violence and reconciliation. Compared to the sometimes intensely personal and specific reflections on violence and reconciliation I heard at every other organization I studied in depth, or even with the innumerable Rwandans I conversed with in non-organizational settings, the Gahaya Links weavers referred to reconciliation in general and impersonal terms. They almost always obscured any details that would reveal their personal experiences of violence within general statements about reconciliation.<sup>248</sup> This impersonal quality was almost imperceptible during the interviews, as the women were otherwise forthcoming on many specific personal details (e.g., speaking of their children having protein deficiency, their husbands helping with women's chores in the home, or not having soap to wash their bodies). However, upon the second iteration of data analysis, the impersonal and general quality of reflections on reconciliation became more noticeable, and my one example of trying to break out of it (with the group of women near Gitarama) became even more striking. After several very general reflections on

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<sup>247</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 11, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda. Joy also said in the interview on January 24, 2009: “People must know what women in Rwanda are doing. Let them know that after the genocide, *with the reconciliation, women are working together*. It is something that I want to say about Rwanda, of now” (emphasis added).

<sup>248</sup> Such general and impersonal statements may have been due to the bulk (although not entirety) of my interviews occurring either in group format, or at the Gahaya Links headquarters. They may also be due to a perceived need to obscure personal details in the name of unity, and thus they may be a feature of the type of reconciliation Gahaya Links members are undergoing.

reconciliation with the group, I asked them to give a *specific* example of the difficulties of reconciliation within the cooperative. My translator and I agreed that the women showed no apparent discomfort at the question, but when one woman provided an example, it was about another weaver (presumably not present):

There is one woman I can tell you, after the war happened, she and her family had escaped the country and they returned. But she came later on. When she came, one of the perpetrators was there in the village. She did not want to even meet that guy. To talk to him. Every time he came by she would just hide. She would just hide. So her mother told her why don't you meet with this guy, he has asked for forgiveness, he has been punished enough. Everybody knows that he has asked for forgiveness, you know? So the mother was the drive. So the mother saw that the daughter did not want to reconcile with the guy, so one day she went to the church and she told the guy, "My daughter will be coming home today, so make sure you are ready." So, the mother prepared the guy so they, so he could meet with her...without her knowing. So, then the mother comes from the church singing from the choir and sends this guy to the [daughter's] home. She was at home weaving, you know. So, only to open the door when he knocked on the door and it was that guy. She looked at him and said here is that man again. He came in and was trying to greet her like (gesturing a Rwandan form of greeting), and no she would not give her hand. And so the guy said something to her, he said, "You know what? Be it Hutu or Tutsi, some of the Tutsi were killed and some Hutu were killed so there is no need you know for us to keep fighting each other, we should do some kind of reconciliation." Yeah. So, that day she felt something different because the guy was asking let us try to live together in harmony. So after some time that guy came back and this time the woman was able to forgive. Some signs that she showed that she was able to forgive were that before she would not even touch him and the second time when he came, she was actually the one giving him the chair to sit. So from that experience, my [her] heart was healed. He kept on asking her why were you afraid of me, and she said she always looked at him as a killer, that she feared he would kill her too. So after that we [they] become friends, after that dialogue and even these days he comes and greets her....yeah. She used to fear the guy even when she got married, but now they meet and it's OK.<sup>249</sup>

Several things are notable about this particular reflection. First, I confirmed with my translator that the woman speaking had shifted from the third person to the first person (as shown in the two last sets of brackets above).<sup>250</sup> The shift could have been an error in her speech or in

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<sup>249</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>250</sup> My translator had translated her words directly, at which point I became confused as to which person was now the subject of the sentence. He immediately caught my point, and confirmed to me that she had switched to the first person.



the translation, but it struck both me and my translator as slippage from her attempt to depersonalize the story. The story also obscures whether the subject of the story (the daughter) is a Tutsi returnee or a Hutu returnee (confused further by the earlier return of the family and the later return of the daughter, and the mother's plot to bring the perpetrator and her daughter together).<sup>251</sup> Yet the story makes it clear that the perpetrator has already been punished (so he is certainly a Hutu) and that there was something for her to forgive him for (but not what). The story is also quite notable in that it explicitly mentions that Hutu were killed (although not whether by Hutu or Tutsi), something no other person at Gahaya Links mentioned. Lastly, as reflective of the complexities of reconciliation in Rwanda as the story is, it is not actually about *Gahaya Links* bringing the women together in reconciliation. Therefore, even in pressing for a specific account with a group of women who appeared to feel quite comfortable talking to me about Gahaya Links, the story that arose was impersonal and unspecific about the effects of Gahaya Links on reconciliation.

The second peculiarity in exploring reconciliation at Gahaya Links was the subtle way in which messages about violence and reconciliation came from the leadership. The leaders of Gahaya Links (i.e., Joy and Janet) never (in my data) denied suffering on the other (Hutu) side, or in any way condemned Hutu as a group. In fact, they clearly demanded that the terms "Hutu" and "Tutsi" be dropped altogether. They appeared in both intent and action to be promoting the advancement of *women* above any ethnicity. Were it not for the iterative process of data analysis, I might have missed the ways in which their underlying assumptions about violence and reconciliation in Rwanda were being expressed. These were most clearly shown when Joy was speaking about the initial meetings of the groups (*italics indicate key segments*):

...because you know, I tell them [trainees] about the genocide. We can't keep on living in the past. It happened, you can't forget it, but you have to move on. Because like the groups we work with, if you ask them who are the Tutsi who are the Hutu, I don't

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<sup>251</sup> For example, the woman might have been a Hutu married to a Tutsi who was killed by the (Hutu) perpetrator, and therefore the mother (a Hutu) would have been more likely to press her to reconcile. A Tutsi mother pressuring a Tutsi daughter to reconcile in this manner would have been more atypical.

know...I ask them, do you speak the same language? Yes, you are blessed....In the beginning it was so difficult because, in the villages we would go and the women would not talk to each other, so we had to start with reconciliation before we started with anything, with anything else. Because I said we have to sit together and talk. We can't keep on this anger in our hearts, it is going to destroy us. *I said, look, look at me, I lost my brother in the war. But I am here trying to, to help you help yourselves. So, if your, if the husband of your friend killed your kid, this lady didn't tell the husband to want to kill, and if she did, are you going to turn back and kill her?* There was so much bitterness, and I [said] we can't even sit together when you have anger inside of you. But I said I'm not going to force you but I want you to see that, first of all that our loved ones will not resurrect. *And these people can't reverse the things that they did, that can't be reversed, it has happened, it has happened.* Now what are we going to do?...But it is always changing. Today they will talk, tomorrow they will not talk! Back and forth. But literally, as we continued, they saw that we were definitely not going to give up on them because we have a vision...I said you know we're not going to leave you alone.<sup>252</sup>

Later in this same interview, Joy again recognized the need to let women share their stories before starting in with weaving:

Even when they come, every two weeks we bring 60 women and actually before we start even weaving, we have to talk about ourselves. Why are we here for? Why are you here? What do you want to achieve after this? So, we talk, each woman stands up and tells her story. And the more they talk about it, the more it comes out. *I used to be annoyed about it because I am not [...] but now God has showed I can forgive these guys for what has happened, and then another will stand up and say "Ooooh, I have nightmares, I don't sleep because of what my husband did, what my son did."* *But I want God to forgive them and show them the way.* So, it is actually reconciliation we are doing, it is done more than the baskets (Brackets indicate Joy's own abrupt shift in speech).<sup>253</sup>

Within these two passages from one interview are embedded stories about violence and reconciliation in Rwanda that closely reflect society-wide stories about who the victims and perpetrators in Rwanda are, and about who is learning to forgive and who needs forgiveness. For example, in the first passage, Joy refers to losing a brother in the war. Even if it was not otherwise clear from her history as a refugee from Uganda, her mention of a brother dying in the war would certainly be interpreted as a reference to a Tutsi RPF soldier who had sacrificed his

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<sup>252</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>253</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

life for Rwanda. A Hutu sister might also want to share her loss of a brother dying in the war, but to do so would amount to saying he was a *genocidaire* -- even if he was not one. Therefore, she might mention it in terms of guilt and shame, but not in terms of painful or perhaps unjustified loss (as Joy is free to do). In the second passage, Joy indicates initial annoyance at the stories women told then implies they are the stories of guilt-ridden Hutu she has learned to forgive. Similarly, in the first passage above and in other interview passages, the descriptions of reconciliation Joy and Janet provide refer to Tutsi victims and Hutu perpetrators (or female relatives of perpetrators), never Hutu victims.

In no way are the foregoing observations intended to efface or minimize the incomprehensible and widespread suffering of the Tutsi, or to question the sincere efforts and intent of Gahaya Links leaders to truly promote women's empowerment and unity and reconciliation in Rwanda.<sup>254</sup> The above observations are simply meant to point out that there are also Hutu who suffered profound loss in Rwanda before, during, and after the 1994 genocide, but that their stories are very rarely acknowledged or affirmed in Rwanda (as discussed in Chapter Two). From the data gathered in this study, messages from the Gahaya Links *leadership* appear to resemble and to some extent reinforce the society-wide pattern of disavowing the suffering of Hutu.<sup>255</sup>

However, Gahaya Links cooperatives are operating in rural and urban areas throughout the country, and their leadership is very localized, a reality that Janet and Joy in fact created. Thus, messages from the leadership at the center are not necessarily representative of the actual experiences of the weavers in their cooperatives or weaving groups. For example, despite the generally impersonal and unspecific expressions of the women weavers in regards to reconciliation, the reflection of Marie (the Hutu President of the cooperative near Gitarama)

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<sup>254</sup> Such observations are also not meant in any way to deny the genocide of 1994, or to debate parity between the crimes committed against Hutu vs. those against the Tutsi, although unfortunately it is not uncommon for such statements to be interpreted in this manner by extremists on both sides of the Rwandan debate.

<sup>255</sup> The point is made a bit more complicated by the fact that Tutsi were so often victimized by neighbors or other close associates, while Hutu have more commonly been victimized by unfamiliar members of the RPF. With many Tutsi, reconciliation is with proximate persons, whereas for Hutu such is much less commonly the case.

suggests there may be more inclusive forms of reconciliation going on at the local level:

On a more personal level, some of us, the reason we are in this cooperative is it helps us to get together and put away the differences...For example, I used to see somebody coming to register in the cooperative yet maybe I really have a problem or a personal gripe about that person, so I would feel like standing up and going away. But the end result is that you try to accept them in your life and there's always that happiness of having your friend in somebody who was your enemy. And in short everybody who joins this cooperative we are glad to receive them.<sup>256</sup>

Furthermore, in regards to the leaders of Gahaya Links (i.e., Joy and Janet), Marie speaks to how their approach was different from the more stereotypical Tutsi returning from exile:<sup>257</sup>

So there are many things they have done to help us. One is closely monitoring the women groups. Two is by working together with them and having daily meetings, and also they were able to use their own example to tell us about their own experiences...for them they came from outside the country and when they came to Rwanda they never began by fighting with Rwandese and telling them to go out of their pieces of land, but they learned how to deal with Rwandese and work with them instead of fighting with them. At the meetings we talk about these things and we come up with resolutions on what to do since we are parents and for us we want to take the first step to teach the right things to the children. So we have resolutions on what to do about the current situation so that this never happens again.<sup>258</sup>

Marie's mention of "teach[ing] the right things to the children" is also something Joy expressed in her last interview with me:

Now let us grow with a different generation, a new generation, to not be like what has happened in Rwanda, let us now preach forgiveness, so at least when kids are born, they are born when we are talking forgiveness.<sup>259</sup>

Therefore, although the leaders' seeming disavowal of Hutu suffering may or may not be

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<sup>256</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>257</sup> According to data from this study and others (e.g. Burnet, 2005), a very common complaint about Tutsi returning from exile is that they took the property and land of the Hutu who had fled the country or who could not defend their property rights for fear of being accused as *genocidaires*.

<sup>258</sup> Data from group interview on January 21, 2009 in village near Gitarama, Rwanda.

<sup>259</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

a real impediment to meaningful reconciliation at Gahaya Links, it appears that local groups operate independently of the center on many matters (including reconciliation). Furthermore, Janet and Joy have designed a business that seems to aspire to cultivate a new generation “born when we are talking forgiveness” by bringing women together in a culturally relevant way, as described by Joy:

There was so much bitterness, but also what helped a lot, in our culture we used to sit together weaving and sing[ing]. And tell stories. So I use that with the women and say we can't even sit together when you have anger inside of you.<sup>260</sup>

And perhaps, recalling the very first passage from the *Reconciliation and Unity* section of this case report, as Eugenie says, “Just the fact of meeting is enough.”

#### *Political Considerations (GL)*

Much about Gahaya Links' political stance is implicit in the foregoing discussion of subtle messages conveyed by the Gahaya Links leadership regarding who has suffered in Rwanda and who has not; who is struggling to forgive and who is to be forgiven. Beyond that, it is important to note that Gahaya Links collaborates with the RPF-dominated government in multiple ways, which would be clear to any of the women weavers. The government actively promotes organizing the women into cooperatives, has built training centers for them, and covers their travel and subsistence costs when they attend training (IFC, 2008). Despite ongoing challenges in exporting goods from Rwanda, the Rwanda Revenue Authority (under President Kagame's order) has given Gahaya Links a special clearance for exports (IFC, 2008). In fact, President Kagame personally inaugurated the first Gahaya Links order for Macy's in New York in 2004 (IFC, 2008). And the New Times, the pro-government daily newspaper in Rwanda, has commended Gahaya Links several times (e.g., Nkurunziza, 2009; Mukaaya, 2008). In the other direction, Janet Nkubana in particular pressures the government, with apparent confidence, to do more to clear the road for exports (IFC, 2008) and to set up “monitoring” structures for the

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<sup>260</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

women's cooperatives.<sup>261</sup>

Thus, there appears to be a closely linked, favorable, and mutually driving relationship between the government and the Gahaya Links leadership. While Joy expressed some mild frustrations with the government ministries to me, at no time was the broader RPF political agenda questioned or criticized.<sup>262</sup> Gahaya Links' pro-government stance might not be a deterrent to more open dialogue in the locally-run cooperatives, as long as such dialogue does not go far enough afield of politically acceptable views to draw attention from local authorities. But the fact that the leaders of Gahaya Links come from the same part of the Rwandan population as President Kagame does (i.e., Ugandan Tutsi returnees) would be known to the women weavers of Gahaya from the very first meeting in the village, and this subset of the population holds nearly all political power in Rwanda (as shown in Chapter Two). If and when Joy and/or Janet share their personal story of living in exile and losing their brother in the war, it would be clear to the women weavers that they were, and likely still are, RPF supporters. Then when the weavers come to Kigali for training at the Gifted Hands Innovation Center, they attend sessions on *unity and reconciliation* taught by government agencies (especially the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission).<sup>263</sup> They also visit the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center, where the RPF's view on the genocide and the events surrounding it are clearly on display.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> The term "monitoring" was mentioned once or twice in regards to what the government could or should offer to support Gahaya Links' work. I did not explore the meaning of this term; the extent to which it reflected international standards on monitoring and evaluation; or what specific role the government should play in the opinion of Joy and/or Janet.

<sup>262</sup> Current events during fieldwork for this study were the arrest of RPF leader Rose Kabuye in Germany, and the resulting demonstrations against Germany in Kigali. I was unable to ascertain Joy's opinions on this set of events (data from fieldnotes, 2008).

<sup>263</sup> Data from the Gahaya Links website, at: [www.gahayalinks.com/impact](http://www.gahayalinks.com/impact), last accessed on December 20, 2010: "Since weavers are of various backgrounds, Gahaya Links *supplements government efforts* [emphasis added] to sensitize weavers on unity and reconciliation. The 1994 genocide was as a result of ethnic hatred. So women and men are taught how to live, work together and love each other."

<sup>264</sup> The Kigali memorial (built in partnership with the UK-based Aegis Trust) provides minimal coverage of the multiple incursions of the RPF into Rwanda before 1994, and no coverage of the stresses created by the incursion on the entire Rwandan population (Hutu and Tutsi). It also presents a solidly debunked view on pre-colonial politics, blaming the divisions entirely on the arriving colonial powers: "We had lived in peace for many centuries, but now the divide between us had begun." See <http://www.kigalimemorialcentre.org/old/index.html>, last accessed on December 20, 2010.

Joy describes what happens when the women go to the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center:

And before they go [home], I make sure they go to the memorial of genocide to see what happened. Many of them would not go otherwise. And when they go there, when they come back, they have understanding. Those who have lost people, they cry. You know, but it's quite an experience for them, they have to go through that. You can't forget and you have to be strong about it. It happened, there is nothing that you can do. [Instead], what do you do next?<sup>265</sup>

In short, it seems reasonable to suspect that Hutu and Tutsi women weavers who hold alternate views of violence and reconciliation in Rwanda would either only express those views to the extent possible in their local weaving groups; would not express them at all; or would not join in the first place. This suspicion was confirmed to me by one Tutsi survivor who did *not* join Gahaya Links because she felt it was generating profit for those from “outside the country” who had “benefited from our great suffering.”<sup>266</sup>

#### *Case Summary (GL)*

The preceding sections have described field access and applications of methods, as well as Gahaya Links' origins and leadership; mission, vision, values and goals; program activities/business model; programmatic approach to empowerment and reconciliation; findings derived from data analysis; and political considerations. In summary, Gahaya Links is a for-profit network of cooperatives comprised of over 4,000 women weavers throughout Rwanda, who are organized into smaller local cooperatives. By reaching out to rural women and training them to greatly improve the quality of their baskets, and by providing them access to Western markets, Gahaya Links directly impacts the livelihoods of its members and their families and communities. Through empowerment, both economic and sociopolitical, Gahaya Links seeks also to promote reconciliation.

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<sup>265</sup> Data from interview with Joy Ndungutse on January 24, 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with Rwandan woman weaver in Kigali, January of 2009. This woman was organizing a group of weavers on her own to do similar work. It is not uncommon for Tutsi survivors to be in conflict with Tutsi returnees (especially those from Uganda), who have gained more power in the government and business communities than any other segment of Rwandan society (see Chapter Two).

The primary activity at Gahaya Links is weaving both traditional and more modern products. Women weavers receive intensive training in financial management and entrepreneurial skills, in addition to advanced techniques and very refined woven patterns, which are produced and sold in foreign markets. They also receive training in a variety of socially important areas, from hygiene to the prevention of domestic violence to reconciliation. Many of these trainings are offered by Gahaya Links' government and NGO partners.

Analysis of Gahaya Links data led to the development of relatively small number of themes, which fell into two broader thematic categories, including: economic and sociopolitical empowerment, and reconciliation and unity. Specific themes within the broader thematic category of economic and sociopolitical empowerment were confidently and clearly expressed by the women weavers, and reflected improvements in many areas of their lives, including: livelihoods of women and their families; family dynamics and social roles; self esteem (from being "overlooked" to having "oil for my skin") and sociopolitical status. Within the broader thematic category of reconciliation and unity, the weavers' expressions were noticeably less confident, concrete, and consistent. Therefore, "themes" included experiences of coming together, working together as women, unity as reconciliation, and peculiarities of exploring reconciliation at Gahaya Links. The political position and stance of Gahaya Links' leadership as both supportive of and supported by the RPF-led government may well have some effect on the experiences of reconciliation and/or open expression of those experiences among members. It seems clear that Gahaya Links achieves a considerable amount of economic and sociopolitical empowerment among its members, which in itself may provide opportunities for transformation on a personal and social level, especially in the area of gender. Yet, the relative lack of recognition of Hutu suffering may also limit transformative reconciliation in the organization. However, it was noted that local groups operate at some distance from the center in Kigali, and may promote very local processes of reconciliation that this study did not manage to access.



## Case Report: African Evangelistic Enterprise

African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) in Rwanda is an affiliate of a pan-African Christian organization named African Enterprise (AE), which currently operates in ten African countries, including Rwanda.<sup>267</sup> AEE Rwanda is involved in a wide variety of programming throughout the country. Its reconciliation ministry is sizable and includes healing and reconciliation workshops, which is the primary reason for its inclusion in this study. This case report first describes field access and application of methods at AEE. It then discusses AEE Rwanda's origins and leadership; and its mission, vision, values and goals. Next, in a fashion unique to this case report, it summarizes AEE Rwanda's *broader* approach and activities. AEE Rwanda's reconciliation ministry, including a detailed description of healing and reconciliation retreats, appears separately. Then, the findings of the study in regards to the retreats are presented, and a set of political considerations are examined. The case report ends with a short case summary.

### *Field Access and Application of Methods (AEE)*

I first became aware of African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) through my search for a home base in Kigali for fieldwork in summer of 2007.<sup>268</sup> A Rwandan studying at Cornell had a brother working at AEE, and he suggested I stay at AEE's Israel Havugimana Guesthouse. Finding the guesthouse to be clean, safe, friendly, and reasonably priced, I decided to work with its inconvenient location and used AEE as my home base for fieldwork in 2007 and 2008, only using a private residence for the tail end of my fieldwork in 2009.

As I had no intention of including AEE (or any religious groups) in the earlier phases of

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<sup>267</sup> AEE Rwanda is also commonly called African *Evangelistic* Enterprise, the inconsistency being somewhat typical for Rwanda. Terms are used interchangeably. There are currently ten AE teams in Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe as well as pan-African teams for Mission and Reconciliation. These offices are in partnership with support Boards around the world in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States. The whole organization is governed by an International Partnership Board. See: <http://aeinternational.org/international/> last accessed on January 10, 2011.

<sup>268</sup> Although I had been to Rwanda for consultancies in 2006 and early 2007, the summer of 2007 was the first official fieldwork phase.

my study, I somewhat passively absorbed the abundance of activity and contact at AEE. The national headquarters for AEE programs in Rwanda is located in the same compound as the guesthouse, so each day would begin at about 7:30 am with national staff and various people from regions throughout Rwanda beginning their workday with quite impassioned “devotionals.”<sup>269</sup> In addition to its national staff, AEE attracts many foreign missionaries and volunteers, who stay at the guesthouse and/or work with AEE in wide a variety of ways.<sup>270</sup> AEE also attracts Christian leaders from other parts of Rwanda or Africa more generally, most but not all of them evangelists and/or charismatics.<sup>271</sup> Due to the size of the guesthouse, at times it was quite peaceful with only a few guests, while at other times it was loud and chaotic, with 40-50 youth leaders up all night laughing, screaming, and slamming doors. The kitchen/restaurant at the guesthouse could serve typical Rwandan fare for one or for 70, employing about 15 people for cleaning, cooking, and guesthouse reception and management.

Through the course of multiple trips entailing many months of living at AEE, I developed close friendships with a number of the guesthouse staff, and found some of them to be sources of critical information that cannot be easily discussed in Rwanda. I also benefited from innumerable informal conversations with AEE’s national staff and from regular contact with foreign missionaries and NGO leaders supporting AEE’s work. Quite literally, each day would bring new visitors and new perspectives to be explored over breakfast or dinner, as AEE visitors were generally more than eager to engage me in conversation and share their views on recovery and reconciliation in Rwanda. Such informal conversations lasted from five minutes to several

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<sup>269</sup> Devotionals were sessions of song, dance, and boisterous communal prayers. They often included “testimonies” shared by the participants, and reflections of team members on the state of the community. Issues faced by the AEE community during my fieldwork were the alleged theft of \$400 from an expatriate staff member’s purse, and the departure of Team Leader Rutayisire for another position with the Anglican Church in Rwanda (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009). I was invited but not required to attend the devotional sessions.

<sup>270</sup> Some are volunteers on short-term projects, while at least one has worked at AEE for years. Various donors of AEE programs also visit to observe AEE’s work. Some stay at the guesthouse and others stay elsewhere (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009).

<sup>271</sup> Some visitors to AEE were quite moderate and “not at all evangelical” (data from interview with two American supporters of AEE on July 14, 2007), while others were quite far out on the charismatic spectrum (e.g., a Nigerian group that was up all night long speaking in tongues and pounding on the floors (data from fieldnotes, October 2008).

hours, and usually took place in the guesthouse restaurant, or in the small salon that sat just beyond my room. Occasionally, I would run in to AEE visitors at a restaurant/hotel not far from AEE, where fast internet and private conversation could be easily had.

I formally interviewed a number of AEE staff on both AEE matters and more general issues of Rwandan reconciliation. These interviews included two of the guesthouse staff members, and two American women working for AEE. On two occasions I interviewed Rwanda Team Leader Antoine Rutayisire (described in more depth below).<sup>272</sup> These interviews lasted about an hour a piece and took place in the AEE offices or in the guesthouse. I also interviewed the two leaders of AEE's healing and reconciliation ministry, Francois and Marie (pseudonyms) in their offices, for well over an hour each.

Due to the encouragement I received from multiple AEE staff members and volunteers, relatively early in my 2007 fieldwork phase I attended one AEE healing and reconciliation retreat for women survivors (in Nyamata, about an hour and a half from Kigali) and another for teachers (in Kigali), although I attended different parts of each. I did not intend to include AEE in my study in 2007, but because the retreats were intriguing in a number of ways, I took many fieldnotes and informally interviewed retreat leaders and participants. In 2008, after I had decided to include religious groups in the study, I attended one more retreat in its entirety (in Rwamagana, more than an hour from Kigali) and interviewed several AEE staff (some of them repeats) to fill in missing details. As with PCR, some of my interviewees approached me spontaneously at retreats and therefore interview protocols were unevenly applied, and only a few of my AEE interviews were recorded. A number of interviewees were persons who had attended retreats previously and were leaders of retreats or leaders of groups that were established through retreats, and therefore much interview data is retrospective. Also, as AEE

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<sup>272</sup> As with previous case reports, all names below the highest level of leadership at AEE are replaced with pseudonyms. Pseudonyms are not provided for Rutayisire or several others at AEE whose identities cannot be concealed because of their appearance in key publications. Again, at no time did any participant of this study or leader within an organization request to remain anonymous, but pseudonyms were deemed necessary to protect research subjects and myself.

retreats vary much more than PCR retreats in terms of group composition and size, leadership, and the intensity of the group experience, consistencies and patterns across types of data were more difficult to discern.

Upon return to the US and with commencement of data analysis, I determined that there were a number of gaps in my information about AEE, specifically clarity about its pre-genocide years; its variety of non-reconciliation programming today; and the development of the healing and reconciliation retreat curriculum. I was able to mostly close these gaps by communicating further (by email and Skype) with AEE staff members, and through a number of print and online sources regarding AEE and associated organizations. Printed sources in chronological order of Rwandan history (i.e. from pre- to post-genocide) include: Longman (2010); Gatwa (2005); Rutayisire (1995); Steward (2009); Lloyd & Nyamutera (2010); Lloyd, Nyamutera, and Sabamungu (2010); Larson (2009); and AEE's Annual Reports from 2008 and 2009. Online sources of importance in triangulating and enriching the field data included: AE International;<sup>273</sup> AEE Rwanda;<sup>274</sup> LeRucher;<sup>275</sup> CARSA (a closely associated organization);<sup>276</sup> Rwanda Partners (a major funder of AEE);<sup>277</sup> and several other websites that describe AEE Rwanda's work. These printed and online sources form the bulk of documentary data for this study, as I had quite limited access to AEE's documentary data in-country.<sup>278</sup> A summary of all data sources for AEE is provided in Table 5.3.

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<sup>273</sup> See: <http://aeinternational.org/international/>, last accessed on January 10, 2011.

<sup>274</sup> See: <http://aeerwanda.org/>, last accessed on March 10, 2011.

<sup>275</sup> See: <http://lerucher.org/>, last accessed on January 10, 2011. LeRucher is the organization to which Rhiannon Lloyd (the primary developer of AEE's retreat model) moved after leaving AEE.

<sup>276</sup> See: <http://www.carsa.org.rw/carsa%20english.htm>, last accessed on January 10, 2011. CARSA employs some leaders who were trained at AEE, and utilizes similar methods.

<sup>277</sup> See: <http://rwandapartners.tumblr.com/>, last accessed on January 10, 2011. Rwanda Partners has revamped its website in the past year, making much of its previous content difficult or impossible to find.

<sup>278</sup> Only excepting Duhozanye (the fourth case), I found it very difficult to press for documentary data for the organizations in this study. While it was easy to request promotional or explanatory materials (such as brochures, retreat manuals, or annual reports), requesting internally disseminated documents for a Rwandan organization would have almost certainly aroused suspicion and would probably have worked against the purposes of this study.

**Table 5.3: Sources of Data for African Evangelistic Enterprise**

Interviews with demographic information	Observation	Documents/Video
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rwanda Team Leader (2 times): male Tutsi survivor</li> <li>• 2 Rwandan Healing and Reconciliation ministry leaders (1-2 times each): 1 Hutu male, one Tutsi female</li> <li>• 1 early developer of retreat model: male Hutu</li> <li>• 2 Rwanda-based American employees (1 formal, multiple informal): 1 woman &gt; 62 y.o., 1 woman</li> <li>• 2 guesthouse staff (multiple times): 1 male Hutu, 1 female Hutu</li> <li>• 9 participants: 4 Tutsi women, 2 Tutsi males, 3 Hutu males</li> <li>• Many informal interviews with AEE supporters, staff members, visitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 healing and reconciliation retreats: 2 partial, 1 complete.</li> <li>• Multiple add'l individual testimonies given at retreats.</li> <li>• Long transports with leaders to and from retreats</li> <li>• Many AEE events for youth, revival groups, holidays, and others.</li> <li>• Peripheral activities, e.g. street children project, Center for Champions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2008/ 2009 Annual Reports</li> <li>• AEE and other websites (shown in text)</li> <li>• Multiple books and articles describing AEE history and approach (shown in text).</li> </ul>

**Note:** Age of all persons over 62 years of age are indicated with > 62 y.o. to distinguish persons who would have been young adults during critical events of 1959-1962.

*Origins and Leadership (AEE)*

“African Enterprise (AE) is a Christian, international, interracial, interdenominational, and non-political organization, with a mission to ‘evangelize the cities of Africa through word and deed in partnership with the Church.’”<sup>279</sup> It was founded in 1961 by South African Dr. Michael Cassidy and Ugandan Bishop Festo Kivengere, among others (Gatwa, 2005). There are four core areas of AE’s work throughout Africa, all of them non-profit: evangelism, reconciliation and justice, leadership development, and aid and development.<sup>280</sup>

In 1981, an office for AE in Francophone Central Africa was opened by Tharcisse Gatwa (Gatwa, 2005), and the entity currently called AEE Rwanda was established in 1984 (making it

<sup>279</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda’s 2009 Annual Report.

<sup>280</sup> Data from AE website at: <http://aeinternational.org/international/AE>, last accessed on January 10, 2011.

the only organization in this study that existed before the genocide).<sup>281</sup> AEE Rwanda's initial focus was on missions within the Anglican Church, but after 1986 it expanded its operations into leadership training, one of the other three core areas of AE's ministry in Africa.<sup>282</sup> When the RPF began the civil war in 1990, political divisions became more pronounced, and the various churches were increasingly implicated in politics to varying degrees (Longman, 2010; Gatwa, 2005). From about December 1990 onwards, AEE played an active role in bringing the Christian churches together to promote reconciliation, holding week-long conferences for leaders; organizing public rallies and revivalist meetings; teaching and preaching in schools, hospitals, prisons, and so on (Gatwa, 2005). A "prophetic" and "righteous" voice for Rwanda's Christians during this time was AEE Team Leader Israel Havugimana, alongside other AEE leaders such as Antoine Rutayisire (Gatwa, 2005).<sup>283</sup> In fact, Havugimana met with President Habyarimana personally to implore him to abide by the Arusha Accords of 1993, and spoke out publicly against the killings of Tutsi in 1993 (Gatwa, 2005).<sup>284</sup> Although he increasingly received death threats (including a grenade attack in his home), he refused to withdraw his support for his Tutsi brothers and sisters (Rutayisire, 1996).<sup>285</sup> According to Gatwa (2005), AEE was faced with a dilemma at this time; appeal to the unpopular and increasingly hard line church hierarchy to mobilize citizen and political support for reconciliation, or continue as it was doing.

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<sup>281</sup> Data from interview on July 14, 2007 with one of AEE's earliest retreat leaders Joseph Nyamutera. There is some ambiguity in the data about how AEE Rwanda was begun, but it does not appear to be significant. AEE's 2009 Annual Report states AEE Rwanda was founded in 1984.

<sup>282</sup> Data from interview of Joseph Nyamutera on July 14, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>283</sup> Data from Gatwa (2005), confirmed in interviews with AEE leaders from 2007-2009.

<sup>284</sup> Also from Gatwa (2005, p. 213-214): "A challenging message in the same campaign was delivered in the National Stadium *Amahoro* on 19 December 1993 by a layperson, Israel Havugimana, to almost 10,000 people. Havugimana affirmed that the country was losing its direction and was moving towards darkness. To get rid of the dangers, Havugimana suggested the country needed a leader like Moses who would put the interests of the people first; an intelligent leader, patient, credible in the eyes of the people and God-fearing, had to emerge if Rwanda was to survive as a nation. Havugimana did not survive the genocide!"

<sup>285</sup> Rutayisire (1996, p. 14) describes Havugimana's response to the grenade attack: "We then discussed the possibility of stopping our prayer group, so as not to compromise him any longer. 'What Christian testimony would that be?' he retorted. 'To shy away from my brothers and sisters because they are targeted! I have been preaching reconciliation, and I will live it even if I have to pay for it with my own blood.'"

They chose the former, but it failed. As Gatwa (2005, p. 213) writes, “Many waited for a miracle to transform these prelates into advocates of a good cause, but it never happened.” Havugimana was “gunned down the very first day of the massacres with his three daughters, Rachel, Danielle, and Mireille, in the company of his father and some visitors” (Rutayisire, 1996, p. 14).<sup>286</sup> Thus, AEE Rwanda’s reconciliation ministry originated in the years *before* the 1994 genocide. The expansion of the ministry in the post-genocide period is covered in more depth below in the section, *Reconciliation Ministry*.

Antoine Rutayisire (a Tutsi) survived the genocide and rebuilt AEE’s ministry in Rwanda, serving as Team Leader from 1994 to 2008. During this study, Antoine became Pastor of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, and was appointed Subdean of St. Etienne Cathedral in Kigali. The current Team Leader at AEE Rwanda is also a Rwandan.<sup>287</sup> The core of AEE’s current leadership (about 40-50 people) is based in Kigali, including varying numbers of staff for each of the four core ministries.<sup>288</sup> AEE Rwanda now has nine regional offices, each of which works with national program managers to implement programs.<sup>289</sup> Regional offices may have from 5-15 staff members, who then work with hundreds more leaders of churches, associations, and other entities supported by AEE.<sup>290</sup> Senior leadership is all Rwandan, but AEE programs regularly attract American or European volunteers/interns from Christian organizations abroad, and AEE may employ several international staff at any one time.<sup>291</sup> Many AEE programs spawn local initiatives that are run by AEE trainees and/or advised by AEE, so the number of people

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<sup>286</sup> Danielle survived (Rutayisire, 1995, p. 14).

<sup>287</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2008-2009).

<sup>288</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda’s 2008 Annual Report. Exact numbers were not yet available for 2009, but email correspondence with American administrator of AEE (in January of 2011) confirmed numbers were about the same as previous year.

<sup>289</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda’s 2008 Annual Report indicate there were eight regional offices in 2008, which has since been expanded to nine.

<sup>290</sup> Data from interview with AEE’s healing and reconciliation ministry leader Francois on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>291</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

working under the aegis of AEE may number in the tens of thousands.<sup>292</sup>

### *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals (AEE)*

AEE Rwanda's mission and vision statements differ somewhat across documents, and the program has changed significantly over time, especially after the genocide.<sup>293</sup> With a mild degree of paraphrasing, AEE Rwanda's stated core mission is to "see the gospel of Jesus Christ spread throughout every part of the nation," although its approach is considerably broader, as shown in the following sections.<sup>294</sup> Its (post-genocide) vision or "dream" is to "see Rwanda becoming a country where God is honored and true [b]iblical reconciliation is the center of our communities, allowing Rwandans to live together in peace and harmony with all their basic needs being met."<sup>295</sup>

### *Rwanda-wide Program Approach and Activities*

To understand AEE Rwanda's approach to reconciliation, it is first necessary to understand it in context of AEE's broader approach, which is based on "holistic transformation," serving the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of a person, and "sharing the hope of Jesus Christ," while also aiding and empowering the community.<sup>296</sup> AEE strives to "create self-respect, confidence, and dignity in individuals throughout the communities of Rwanda...to proactively empower those [they] serve through knowledge, attitude, and change. In doing so, [their] ministry of word and deed becomes an integrated approach of applying all aspects of

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<sup>292</sup> Data from interview with AEE's healing and reconciliation ministry leader Francois on July 31, 2007. Interestingly, no AEE staff person interviewed could provide more than estimates of the number of people working for AEE.

<sup>293</sup> The language in documentary data sources actually remains quite consistent, but different phrases appear under "mission," "approach," or "vision" across several years' various print and electronic sources.

<sup>294</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda's 2009 Annual Report.

<sup>295</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda's 2009 Annual Report. None of the documents I collected contain goals and values, although they do have sections on "approach."

<sup>296</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda's 2009 Annual Report. With some differences in phrasing, these excerpts are consistent with other data sources, such as AEE Rwanda's recently launched webpage at: <http://aerwanda.org/>, last accessed on March 11, 2011.



community life to one's faith."<sup>297</sup> These statements are founded on the beliefs that the spiritual needs of a population go hand in hand with physical and emotional needs; and that self-empowerment (commonly called "self-help" at AEE) is crucial to personal and spiritual growth.

AEE Rwanda's strong emphasis on empowerment is reflected in its 2009 Annual Report, which is peppered with quotes from people no longer "taking hand-outs," and *Kinyarwanda* phrases such as, "*Amazi wivomeye*," meaning, "The water you have fetched for yourself is very sweet." Indeed, although AEE designs and implements many programs to meet multiple needs, it often lacks funds to be a donor for locally derived projects and therefore does much of its work in partnership with local communities, helping them to find their own solutions to local problems and to *attract* funding to support them.<sup>298</sup> Despite the foregoing statements of an evangelical nature, AEE's efforts (outside the healing and reconciliation workshops) do not appear to be limited to Christian communities, or to people who might be converted. AEE also serves non-Christian populations, and some of its programming is not explicitly evangelistic, or even Christian.<sup>299</sup>

It is nearly impossible to summarize all AEE-implemented or affiliated activities in Rwanda (especially as these vary by region, and change over time), but there are four core areas of AEE Rwanda's activity, which cross-cut AE's Africa-wide core ministries. These include: HIV/AIDS and family leadership programs; women and child-headed household programs; regional programs (these vary by region); and evangelism, reconciliation, and literacy programs (which house the healing and reconciliation retreats discussed below).<sup>300</sup> There are some well-

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<sup>297</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda's 2009 Annual Report.

<sup>298</sup> Data from Legatum Foundation Case Study (2009), at: <http://www.legatum.com/casedisplay.aspx?id=593&site=3&type=&keywords=>, also confirmed in fieldwork interviews (2007-2009).

<sup>299</sup> This is particularly so in the areas of socio-economic empowerment for individuals and communities. Data from interview with Francois, AEE's healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007, and confirmed in phone interview with American staff member Kathy on January 11, 2011.

<sup>300</sup> Data from AEE Rwanda's 2008 Annual Report. A similar breakdown of activity is reported in the 2009 Annual Report, but some inconsistency occurs across multiple data sources, and among staff members' understanding of all AEE Rwanda's programming. This degree of inconsistency was deemed to be a reflection of the diversity and

known mainstays of AEE's work such as self-help groups (SHG), with beneficiaries numbering in the tens of thousands. SHGs promote financial planning and savings; leadership training; and employment strategies for families and individuals.<sup>301</sup> Also well-known are AEE's "improved literacy" campaigns in primary and secondary schools, which promote literacy and incorporate a secular approach to reconciliation. "Catch-up schools" are special schools for people trying to complete education that has been interrupted by violence and displacement. AEE also supports orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) clubs; and support services for child-headed households (CHH). A wide variety of educational initiatives on health issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, disease prevention) are provided with both prevention and support programming. One well-known initiative is the "Center for Champions" in Rwamagana, which is a residential and educational training facility for over 200 youths who were previously on the streets. Leadership training on many levels is offered to local leaders of women's groups, children's groups, local leaders, church leaders, and so on. AEE also advocates on both local and national levels for women's rights, children's rights, and the needs of the population in regards to healing and reconciliation.<sup>302</sup>

In short, AEE Rwanda provides an enormous amount of programming, in keeping with its declared holistic grassroots empowerment approach. When viewed across its history, the variety of programming AEE Rwanda offers reflects an adaptable and local approach to problems identified by local actors. This is especially so after the genocide created multiple vulnerable populations not previously served by AEE programming, including *genocidaires*, prisoners, *gacaca* judges and witnesses, prostitutes, street children, child heads of household,

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locality of AEE's work, rather than lack of programmatic cohesion. In any case, this study focuses on the healing and reconciliation ministry more narrowly.

<sup>301</sup> Any one AEE region would have hundreds of self-help groups, so the impact of this program across the country is sizable. AEE Rwanda's 2008 Annual Report states, "Many were surprised that the groups not only empowered them economically, it also sparked a social transformation. The group members have found themselves forming strong friendships and have become a vital support to one another."

<sup>302</sup> Data summarized from multiple interviews, observations, and documentary sources (2007-2009).

women of rape, and child perpetrators of genocide.<sup>303</sup> Even the healing and reconciliation workshops (while retaining a core curriculum) have been adapted to a variety of circumstances, populations, and needs. The funders of AEE programs vary from year to year, and are too numerous to list, but include large international development agencies (e.g., USAID); international NGOs (e.g., Rwanda Partners); local funders (e.g. prayer breakfasts); and the Rwandan government.<sup>304</sup> Most, but not all, of AEE Rwanda's supporters are Christian organizations.

### *Reconciliation Ministry*

Notwithstanding the variety of important programming implemented by or affiliated with AEE Rwanda, it is its reconciliation ministry that is of primary importance in this study. AEE's reconciliation ministry includes multiple components that cut across program areas and periods of time in Rwanda. For example, AEE leaders played a prominent role in national prayer conferences and inter-church reconciliation before the genocide (Gatwa, 2005), and have continued their efforts in that area after the genocide.<sup>305</sup> Starting just months after the genocide, AEE supported a radio program that aired every Friday afternoon, in which AEE Team Leader Rutayisire spoke of the agonizing difficulty and necessity of forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>306</sup> More recent efforts have focused on a Christian curriculum for reconciliation in public schools, and on the somewhat secular "literacy groups" mentioned above, which promote reconciliation.<sup>307</sup> Within this variety of activities in AEE's reconciliation ministry is its core

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<sup>303</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>304</sup> Data from 2008 Annual Report, and confirmed in interviews (2007-2009).

<sup>305</sup> During the fieldwork phases of this study, many Christian leaders (including those at AEE) spoke of efforts to bring all the Christian churches together in the ministry of reconciliation, but that the Rwandan Catholic Church in particular has been reticent. As one leader stated before a rally for Christian revival at Amahoro Stadium in August of 2007, "We haven't gotten the Catholics yet, but we will keep trying!" (Data from fieldwork interviews and observations, 2007-2009).

<sup>306</sup> A number of interviewees not even associated with AEE mentioned how important this radio show was to them, and how Rutayisire had been "so encouraging." PCR leaders also supported this radio program in its early days (data from fieldnotes and interviews, 2007-2009).

<sup>307</sup> Data from interviews with Rutayisire on July 27, 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda; and with American staff member Kathy on January 11, 2011.

component, the healing and reconciliation retreat. The following sections discuss the origin and development of the AEE healing and reconciliation retreat; recruitment of participants; retreat principles and format; and key aspects of the retreat approach.

### *Origin and Development of AEE Rwanda's Healing and Reconciliation Retreat*

Although AEE Rwanda clearly had an active reconciliation ministry before 1994, the genocide dramatically expanded it. The core component, the healing and reconciliation retreat, was developed with considerable direction from a Welsh psychiatrist named Rhiannon Lloyd (Gatwa, 2005; Steward, 2009).<sup>308</sup> Lloyd originally came to Rwanda with Medair, an organization she had worked for in Liberia, where she did trauma work with child soldiers and church leaders.<sup>309</sup> In Rwanda, she felt none of what she had done before could be of any use, so she “went into prayer,” where she heard two things: the Cross is the only thing that can heal such huge trauma; and the Church must be mobilized to help Rwanda recover.<sup>310</sup> When Medair moved on, Lloyd was invited to join efforts with AEE, where together with several Rwandan contributors she developed the workshop model entitled, “Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict.”<sup>311</sup>

Due to Lloyd's vision that the healing of Rwanda lay with the Church and that only the Cross could heal such trauma, the AEE retreat was originally designed for pastors and lay leaders of churches.<sup>312</sup> Lloyd and her colleagues at AEE acknowledged that church leaders were often survivors, victims, returnees, or even perpetrators of the genocide; and that they were profoundly

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<sup>308</sup> Data confirmed in interviews with AEE leaders in 2007 and 2008; and in Lloyd's own description at <http://www.lerucher.org/>, last accessed on January 10, 2011.

<sup>309</sup> Data from <http://www.lerucher.org/Content/Reconciliation/Lloyd.html>, last accessed on January 10, 2011.

<sup>310</sup> Data from interview with Joseph Nyamutera on July 14, 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda. Confirmed in Lloyd's own description at <http://www.lerucher.org/>, last accessed on January 10, 2011.

<sup>311</sup> This is also the name of the manual by Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010), and although the HWEC workshop has moved beyond AEE, here it is referred to simply as the “AEE healing and reconciliation retreat.”

<sup>312</sup> See: <http://www.lerucher.org/Content/Reconciliation/Lloyd.html>, last accessed on January 10, 2011. Also confirmed in multiple interviews with AEE staff, 2007-2009.

wounded.<sup>313</sup> Moreover, they noted that conflicts within and between churches before, during, and after the genocide were often the sources of these leaders' wounds. Thus (as with PCR) AEE retreat leaders often refer to leaders in the churches as "wounded healers," and view their healing (i.e., the healing of the church) as essential to their role in healing the nation.<sup>314</sup> The first of AEE's 3-day retreats for Christian leaders was held in June of 1995.<sup>315</sup> For two years, Lloyd and several colleagues (both Hutu and Tutsi) traveled all over Rwanda leading retreats and refining their approach.<sup>316</sup> By August of 1997, having had much assistance and refinement from Rwandans, Lloyd handed the work over to two AEE staff; Joseph Nyamutera (Hutu) and Anastase Sabamungu (Tutsi), who, according to Gatwa (2005, p. 225) "continued to perform with the same energy."<sup>317</sup>

Despite its early emphasis on the healing of Rwandan church leaders, AEE has adapted its healing and reconciliation approach to key events in Rwanda (as well as to conflict situations outside of Rwanda).<sup>318</sup> For example, at first there were only genocide victims in the retreats, but in 1996 and 1997 Hutu returned to Rwanda en masse so tensions rose dramatically in Rwanda, and AEE's outreach to Hutu rose as well. Later, in 2003 and 2004 tens of thousands of confessed or accused Hutu *genocidaires* were released from prisons throughout the country. For

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<sup>313</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda. Later confirmed in Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010).

<sup>314</sup> Many interviewees in this study stated that there is as much conflict among churches as there is between Hutu and Tutsi, yet this point seems to be overlooked in the broader literature on the Rwandan conflict, except where authors explicitly discuss the churches in pre- or post-genocide Rwanda (e.g. Gatwa, 2005; Longman, 2010).

<sup>315</sup> There is some inconsistency in the stated dates of the first retreat. Gatwa (2005) provides September 1994 as the first date, but Lloyd (n.d.) states a date of June 1995.

<sup>316</sup> "A worldwide intercessory prayer group supported Dr. Lloyd spiritually in her ministry" (Gatwa, 2005, p. 225).

<sup>317</sup> Nyamutera only joined the ministry after returning from the DRC in 1997 (Lloyd, Nyamutera, & Sabamungu, 2010). This study included an interview with Nyamutera on July 14, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda. Nyamutera stated Lloyd had handed over the work to himself and Sabamungu. Gatwa (2005) actually mentions a third, but does not name him.

<sup>318</sup> In particular, Lloyd (and later Nyamutera) have gone on to adapt the retreat model through an organization named LeRucher to other circumstances of ethnic conflict (e.g. South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, and others). It is also being expanded to preventative applications, as with forestalling the deepening of prejudice (data from interview with Nyamutera on July 14, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda). Other AEE retreat leaders have gone on to similar reconciliation programs, e.g. CARSA.

Hutu facilitators especially, leading workshops during these periods was extremely challenging, as they came under attack at times from survivors.<sup>319</sup> Furthermore, the early retreats were limited in how deep participants would go because some Hutu would only admit to minor harms, in order to avoid prosecution or accusation at the *gacaca* (Steward, 2009).<sup>320</sup> However, AEE received both qualitative and quantitative boosts when the government started pressing AEE to do retreats in the northwest of the country, where the insurgency of Hutu militia raged from 1996 onwards (Steward, 2009). Importantly, as AEE retreat leaders and participants established the sanctity of confidentiality at the retreats, participants were willing to take more risks and go more deeply into the process.<sup>321</sup>

Over the years AEE has been running its retreats, it has continually adapted its programs for a wide variety of populations and program objectives.<sup>322</sup> For example, now that there are programs serving youth who did not experience the genocide, retreat leaders focus on more personal or familial sources of wounding and try not to assume too much about the participants' experiences or inadvertently impose prejudices that were not already formed.<sup>323</sup> Another area of current emphasis is to bring people together in retreats that can develop greater partnership across divides for joint enterprise.<sup>324</sup>

Indeed, adaptability of approach appears to run throughout AEE's programming, which relies on AEE's efforts to train as many people as possible in its methods. In the case of healing

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<sup>319</sup> Data from interview with Francois (Hutu), healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda and interview with Nyamutera (Hutu) on July 14, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda. I was only aware of incidents of verbal attack, and am uncertain whether there were also physical attacks.

<sup>320</sup> Confirmed in interview data with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda; and Rutayisire on July 27, 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>321</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>322</sup> Data from AEE's 2008 Annual Report states the following groups were served by "personal healing seminars": genocide survivors and perpetrators together (152), secondary school students (116), University students (305), rape victims (118), church leaders (450), teachers (125), primary school children (250), church youth (320), parents (400), prisoners (260).

<sup>323</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>324</sup> Data from phone interview with American staff member Kathy on January 11, 2011.

and reconciliation retreats specifically, by about 1999 AEE Rwanda leaders realized the workshops were not reaching enough people, so they began training local teams to spread the work. In 2004, they conducted a program review and found that over 15,000 Christian leaders had gone through a full three-day workshop, and many of those went on to help others through *gacaca*, student groups, radio programs, and the like. At a lower level of training, over 100,000 had been trained, and there were at least 40 people in each of the (then) 12 provinces who were training other trainers. In addition, many local teams have started up in places where an AEE retreat was held, and these expand into interdenominational meetings, revivals, youth retreats, and other reconciliation efforts.<sup>325</sup>

### *Recruitment of Retreat Participants*

Recruitment of participants for AEE retreats varies considerably across the populations served. In the early years, pastors and lay leaders of churches were recruited through AEE's national and local leadership. However active recruitment has no longer been needed in church communities due to the word of mouth the program has received over the years.<sup>326</sup> With other populations, recruitment may be compulsory, as with the teachers' retreat I attended, where the headmaster of the school had attended a retreat previously and decided all his teachers should attend one also.<sup>327</sup> Recruitment for a retreat may also be due to one particularly dynamic leader, as with the retreat I attended where all participants were survivors of rape. The female leader of this retreat had invited women to attend when she personally "sensed" they were ready.<sup>328</sup> Thus,

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<sup>325</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>326</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>327</sup> I observed the commitment of participants at this retreat was quite low (some stopped coming or only came in late), although I did not realize it was compulsory until after the retreat (data from fieldnotes, August 1, 2007).

<sup>328</sup> Data from interview of retreat leader on July 14, 2007 in Nyamata, Rwanda

in contrast to PCR, AEE retreats often draw people who already know each other, even killers and family members of their victims.<sup>329</sup>

### *Retreat Principles and Format*

Most likely due to AEE's emphasis on adapting its retreats to as many populations as possible, the three AEE healing and reconciliation retreats I attended were quite dissimilar from each other; they were led by facilitators of dramatically unequal maturity, experience, and skill; and they varied considerably in their biblical emphases.<sup>330</sup> The first retreat I observed (for women survivors/ rape victims in Nyamata) was for a homogenous population of people marginalized by Rwandan society for having been raped, yet the male retreat leaders were strikingly tender and respectful in their teachings about the sanctity of the women's relationship to God. The second (for teachers at a Kigali school) focused more than others on familial wounds. But it was compulsory for participants, and was most impressive for its hierarchical structure, shallow facilitation, and the early departure of a number of participants.<sup>331</sup> The third was most typical for an AEE retreat in that the teachings most closely resembled what AEE leaders described, and the descriptions of retreats written by founders Lloyd, Nyamutera, and Sabamungu (2010). In fact, it was only in analyzing the textual materials produced by Lloyd, Nyamutera, and Sabamungu that I was able to see the third retreat as somewhat exemplary.<sup>332</sup> Because there was so much variance between retreats, the following discussion is narrowed to the standard format, guiding principles, and key activities of an AEE retreat across a three day progression. Variations across the retreats are noted as they arise.

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<sup>329</sup> I heard several stories of victims and/or killers being surprised to learn the other was at the same retreat, but whether this was deliberately arranged by the leaders or not was unclear from the data gathered in this study.

<sup>330</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>331</sup> In fact, the second AEE retreat I attended made me more appreciative of the quality of facilitation of a PCR retreat (data from fieldnotes, August 1, 2007).

<sup>332</sup> Specifically, sources by the three authors include: Lloyd, Nyamutera and Sabamungu (2010); Lloyd (1998); and Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010).



*Standard format of an AEE healing and reconciliation retreat.* A retreat at AEE takes three days, which is generally followed by a 2-day follow-up retreat some months after the first retreat. The core principles of the retreat were developed by Lloyd and her Rwandan colleagues, and deliberately incorporate psychological concepts “to help relate [b]iblical teachings to the immediate need of rebuilding lives and restoring relationships in Rwanda” (Steward, 2009, p. 183).<sup>333</sup> The guiding metaphor for the three-day retreat progression is a house -- with a foundation, walls, beams/ceiling, and a roof. The foundation of the house is associated with “understanding God’s heart” (Day One). The walls of the house are associated with the “healing of wounds” (Day Two). The ceiling of the house relates to “repentance and forgiveness,” and the roof of the house relates to “reconciliation” (all on Day Three). The house is the guiding metaphor for an AEE retreat because it “[does] not rush into the difficult subjects of forgiveness, repentance, and reconciliation, before removing the obstacles and laying the proper foundation” (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010, p. 6). The logic of this progression appeared to be readily understood and adopted by retreat participants, and as Steward (2009, p. 183) observes, the building of a house is in itself a “powerful symbol for justice... representing protection and a stable life.”<sup>334</sup>

*Day One: The foundation of the house.* The foundation of the house is about “understanding God’s heart,” especially in regards to what “His original intentions were when He created us, and how these were distorted and lost.” Lloyd and Nyamutera describe this teaching:

If we see him as the author of all our suffering we will not want to come to Him for

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<sup>333</sup> Sixteen principles of a Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict retreat (HWEC) are provided in Lloyd et al (2010), where each “key concept” is linked to a “theological underpinning” (i.e. one or more biblical readings). The chart also provides a column with an “example of what happened” and another with “reflection -- why it made such a difference.”

<sup>334</sup> As Steward (2009) describes, several widows of the genocide who were HIV positive from rape told him that at least they would have this “house” to leave to their children when they died. The importance of a house to restore one’s dignity and sense of having something to contribute to society was echoed also in my interviews with women (not only at AEE).

healing, so it is necessary to wrestle with tough questions about where God is in the midst of suffering and injustice. Christians often need to be given permission to voice their doubts, questions, and anger against God (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010, p. 6-7).

Thus, an AEE retreat may literally begin with the questions, “Where was God in 1994? Did he abandon us? Why did he stand by while we were suffering?”<sup>335</sup> During the first hour or so of a retreat, participants are invited in various ways to join in a frank conversation about their doubts and anger, and their need for healing. Francois, one of the leaders of the healing and reconciliation ministry at AEE during this study, describes the importance of this message:

Usually when people are in great pain, they lose faith in God, they wonder...does God really care? Where was God when I was suffering?...So, we try to bring them to restore that relationship with God...in spite of what happened, God is love; he was not the source of what happened. Though he allowed it he was not the source, he was not the author.<sup>336</sup>

Additionally, the AEE retreat model explicitly recognizes that even before the suffering of violence and division in Rwanda, damaged views of “God as Father” often arise from childhood hurts, as Lloyd and Nyamutera state:

Those who have not experienced parental love are much more likely to pick up a weapon against a fellow human being because it is in our families that our characters are formed...one cannot heal a country and prevent further conflict without first healing families (2010, p. 7).<sup>337</sup>

Recognizing the multiple ways in which participants’ relationships with God have been distorted, AEE retreat leaders then take varying pathways through a series of teachings that relate to “understanding God’s heart,” including:

- The Trinity as the “perfect model of relationship.”
- Why God created different ethnic groups.

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<sup>335</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>336</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>337</sup> The three retreats I observed varied considerably in their coverage of childhood wounds as precursors to violence and division. The first (for rape victims) covered the topic in passing. The second (for teachers) put so much emphasis on it that I was uncertain at first what kind of retreat I was observing. And the third retreat expended about one hour on childhood wounds (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009).

- Original sin as the root of prejudice and hatred between people.
- Creation of a Holy Nation of the healed and redeemed.
- The role of the Church as “God’s agent of change.”
- Many teachings on discovering the God of love and compassion, who gave humans free will and therefore is not the author of our pain.<sup>338</sup>

Thus the first day of an AEE retreat is filled with a progression of biblical teachings designed to open participants up to the depth of their own wounds and the potential to heal those wounds through the creation of God’s Holy Nation.<sup>339</sup> Varying across the three retreats I observed, at multiple times throughout the day the leaders initiated hymns on important themes, such as Christ destroying the walls of separation, or being made into “new people” through Jesus Christ.<sup>340</sup>

The level of participant involvement and activity varied across the three retreats I observed, with some groups breaking spontaneously into song and dance when they appreciated a teaching, while others would sit quietly and take notes on the teachings. The first and second retreats (rape victims and teachers, respectively) had very few participants actively following along in their Bibles, while the third retreat (church leaders) had every one following along. Participants were seated in circles for the first and third retreats, but in rows of desks in a classroom for children in the second retreat. The mood at the end of the day varied considerably across the three retreats, from warm embraces and reluctant goodbyes for the evening (retreat one) to hasty departures (retreat two) to lingering discussion (retreat three). With all three retreats I attended, participants parted for the evening and went home (unlike PCR), and evening study or reflection was not assigned. The exception to this was in the second retreat, where the teachers were given the “homework” of telling their spouses and children they love them upon their return home.

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<sup>338</sup> See Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010, p. 8-32) for more in-depth description.

<sup>339</sup> Although many of the retreat participants I met had heard about the retreat beforehand, several interviewees noted to me that they had been surprised the retreat began in this manner rather than with messages about punishment and condemnation, which they had heard in their churches (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009).

<sup>340</sup> Data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009.

*Day Two: The walls of the house.* The second day of an AEE retreat is about facing, expressing, and healing personal pains by taking them to Jesus as “the pain-bearer.” Francois describes the importance of this message:

We tell them don’t even think about what we will do later, you have to think about yourself first, you have to be healed first. So, we give them some teachings, to bring people back to God.<sup>341</sup>

As Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010, p. 33) state:

It is important to take time to see what we have lost, so that we can understand how wounded we are, and that there is a universal enemy behind all our losses...Many believe that Jesus came to earth only to deal with our sin, but He also wants us to heal our wounds. The Cross deals with both.

Thus the morning of Day Two is building towards preparing people to recognize their wounds and take them to the Cross. It proceeds with a series of biblical and psychological teachings that varied considerably in content across the three retreats I observed, but which included some teaching from each of the following areas:

1. Understanding the sources of human wounds (original sin, family, and society) and the impact of those wounds (trauma, mental and physical illness, distorted beliefs, sinful beliefs and actions, and isolation)
2. How wounds can be healed (overcoming personal and cultural resistances in order to express the pain to others).
3. God’s response to human wounds (by giving us Jesus, who both bears our pain and our sins).
4. Contemplation of Satan as the “thief” who has robbed us of our humanity in multiple ways, as persons and as groups of people.
5. The hope of restoration, through Jesus, of all that has been stolen.<sup>342</sup>

In the retreats I observed, and as confirmed in textual data, the first two topics are largely built

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<sup>341</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>342</sup> These teachings are summarized in pp 33-43 of Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010).

on psychological content (as opposed to the latter three). As Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010, p. 36) observe, “It is widely accepted that, to spur on the healing process, people need to be able to *express* their pain, anger and sadness. But for many of us, this is a very hard thing to do” (emphasis added). In Rwanda in particular, Lloyd and her Rwandan colleagues acknowledged that expression of grief (especially for men) is socially unacceptable, as reflected by the Rwandan expression that “a man’s tears should flow into his stomach” (Larson, 2009; Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010). Furthermore, talking about traumatic experience is commonly thought to be even more traumatizing (Lloyd, 1998).<sup>343</sup> As Lloyd reflects:

This was obviously a major obstacle to helping people towards healing! I wondered how to overcome this without in any way implying that my culture was superior. I found that the only acceptable way (as well as using medical evidence) was to focus on *Jesus as the transcultural model* of perfect humanity from whom all cultures could learn. Starting from this foundation we were then able to have lively discussions examining our self-protective coping mechanism, and this resulted in taking steps towards *giving each other permission to feel* (1998, p. 1-2, emphases added).<sup>344</sup>

In the retreats I attended, I observed ready acceptance of all of the teachings up to this point, but varying amounts of resistance to the idea of sharing personal pains with others. In particular, at the second retreat (for teachers), the leader of the retreat was interrupted several times by participants who wanted clarity on exactly what they would be doing and why. When he responded to such questions by saying they needed to express their pain to each other, there was laughter and softly muttered expressions of “eh-eh-eh” (the Rwandan equivalent of “tsk-tsk”).

However, on the whole, across the three retreats, by the time the participants completed the first step of this process (which was entirely confidential) they appeared to be more amenable to the idea of sharing their stories with others. The first step entailed each participant taking some time apart from everyone else to write down his or her wounds on a piece of paper. At the

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<sup>343</sup> Many formal and informal interviewees in this study commented that speaking of the events was retraumatizing for them (data from fieldnotes and interviews, 2007-2009).

<sup>344</sup> The notion of Jesus as a “transcultural model of perfect humanity” is problematic but will not be analyzed in depth in this study. The biblical reference for this teaching that was used in two of the three retreats I attended was Isaiah 53:4, “Before wounded people can be healed, they must first face and express their pain”

first and third retreats I attended, participants were not limited in how much time they took, while at the second retreat, they were given about 15 minutes to themselves. The leaders' briefing of the activity also differed somewhat across the retreats: at the first retreat the women were coaxed to write about their pain and suffering as women survivors and rape victims; at the second retreat the teachers were encouraged to consider a lifetime's "chronology of pain"; and at the third retreat, there were various comments made about the wounds caused by churches in conflict, but they were not highlighted preceding this particular activity.<sup>345</sup>

As I observed in the three retreats I attended, after some time away considering their personal wounds, the participants started to collect back again in the large group area. A short session on compassionate listening (sometimes with biblical references) was given as a lead-in to working in small groups of no more than three people. Leaders of the retreats designated the participants to go in each small group, intentionally mixing people from different ethnicities or denominations as relevant.<sup>346</sup> The small groups then found space away from others and began one by one to share their wounds with each other. Sometimes these sessions went on for well over an hour, and other times (as with the teachers' retreat) they were only given 15 minutes each to share their "chronology of pain."<sup>347</sup> They were not told to share the exact contents on their pages, but it appeared that many of them referred to the pages throughout their "testimonies."

The visible and audible expressions of emotion during this activity varied across the retreats, with the women survivors often sobbing and collapsing against each other; the teachers sometimes seemingly in deep conversation and other times not; and the church leaders quite engaged with the stories of their group members.<sup>348</sup> Several people I interviewed across all three

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<sup>345</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>346</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009), as confirmed in Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010).

<sup>347</sup> The fifteen minute time limit is actually more in accord with Lloyd and Nyamutera's (2010) model, but the other two retreats clearly went beyond it

<sup>348</sup> I did not sit in on these testimonies, as both myself and the retreat leaders felt it would be more respectful to the participants' process to not have an outside observer.

retreats said that small group meeting was the first time they had ever shared their story in such detail, and indeed at this point in the retreat (even at the teachers' retreat) the atmosphere began to feel palpably different.<sup>349</sup> For example, at the teachers' retreat, I was curious about a woman and a man who had appeared impassive and resistant to both the retreat leader and to being placed with each other. By the end of their small group sharing, she had broken down in tears and leaned in against his chest while he embraced her, tears running down his own face. Another example was one woman (at the retreat for women survivors) who laughed out loud during her testimony and suddenly broke into song.

With the exception of the teachers' retreat (where participants were called back to the large group all at once), small groups at the other two retreats wrapped up their sharing at different times and drifted in and out of the larger group space, eventually coming back together for the next step in the progression. They were then invited to share their thoughts and experiences with the larger group which some of them did quite readily, such as one man who said:<sup>350</sup>

Before I came here, I did not imagine any Hutu person could have suffered like the Tutsi suffered in this country. I said go away you Hutu (laughing) do not talk to me about your property, or your shame. But now my eyes have been opened by Beatrice. She has shown me even some Hutu might have more pain than a Tutsi. It is a gift she has given me, to show me that pain is here in every human's life.

After this period of sharing with the large group, retreat leaders returned to teachings about Jesus as the pain bearer, as they steadily move towards the "Cross Workshop." Francois describes:

We can now see [that] if we are suffering like that, there is not any other person, there is no other way you can find healing and restoration, or be healed, other than taking your wounds to God. So we do a Cross workshop, we say all this pain and suffering, Jesus will take in addition to our sins...we will take all that to the Cross. So, we bring all our

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<sup>349</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>350</sup> Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010) actually suggest more of a flipchart feedback discussion, where "the worst things" heard in the small groups are written down in very specific ways in order to keep the participants present with the painful stories they have heard (and to be contrasted to the "best things" towards the end of the "Cross Workshop"). I did not see the flipchart approach being used, but missed that segment of time at one of the three retreats.

hurts and sins to Jesus, to the Cross, because we know we cannot heal these wounds alone...and a wounded heart cannot forgive.<sup>351</sup>

The Cross Workshop is quite simple in format; each participant nails his piece of paper describing his wounds to a large wooden Cross on the floor of the retreat room.<sup>352</sup> It can be done in solemn and singular silence (as with the first and third retreat I attended) or as a bit more of a melee (as with the teachers' retreat, where men were grabbing hammers and papers from the women and clustering around the Cross to pound them in). Then several members of the group (of opposite ethnicities or denominations when possible) carry the Cross outside, where it is placed on the ground or against an object.<sup>353</sup> There, several people pull the pieces of paper off and burn them one by one, as the group watches in silence or while quietly singing a hymn. This part of the ceremony is meant to symbolize the letting go of past experiences that have gripped participants with grief, fear, and shame; and God receiving all those kinds of pain in heaven (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010). It is followed with a shared prayer for redemption from suffering and then by a session reflecting on the good things that occurred during Rwanda's dark hour (e.g. people who saved others) or the good things that can be drawn out of the suffering they have endured.<sup>354</sup>

At the retreats I attended, the Cross Workshop and the prayer and closing session were followed by many embraces, smiles and laughter, tears, and song and dance, and it was during this time that participants begin to approach me spontaneously to tell me of their experiences.<sup>355</sup> Of those I interviewed at the several retreats, a number of them mentioned the Cross Workshop

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<sup>351</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>352</sup> The teachers' retreat was the only one of the three I observed where the leader encouraged the participants to make two copies of their "chronology of pain" if they wanted to keep one for later reference.

<sup>353</sup> Even at the women's retreat, the men carried the Cross outside.

<sup>354</sup> If the flipchart method is used (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010), the "bad things" they have experienced are then revisited as "the good things" God can make out of the suffering once they have transferred their wounds to Jesus.

<sup>355</sup> The atmosphere at the teachers' retreat, though certainly elevated, was more muted than the other two retreats and small group members seemed to gravitate towards each other (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009).



as the moment they really began to believe there is hope for Rwanda, as with Boniface, a Tutsi pastor and survivor:

I have been leading reconciliation seminars [through my church] but this one was different because it is the first time I – a pastor! – was able to leave my pain at the Cross. I can tell you my heart is so healed. Everyone in Rwanda needs this healing!<sup>356</sup>

As the day closes with the Cross Workshop, there may be a communal meal shared (as there was with the women's retreat) or participants may leave on their own (as they did at the teachers' retreat). Eventually, participants part ways for the evening and go home, to rest for the third day of the retreat.<sup>357</sup>

*Day Three: The ceiling and roof of the house.* Having built the foundation (understanding the heart of God); and the walls (sharing one's pain with others and with Jesus); the AEE retreat then turns to the ceiling (forgiveness and repentance) and finally the roof (reconciliation). As with other periods of intensive teaching at an AEE retreat, there appears to be some variance in the teachings and the scriptures on which they are based, but central messages are consistent.

Forgiveness in particular takes some time to develop, because AEE leaders have recognized that there are large "stumbling blocks" about forgiveness among human beings.<sup>358</sup> As Lloyd (1998) observes, a person may say, "I've forgiven, it's all past," but this is avoidance. Or they may believe that forgiveness means condoning the sin, or turning away from justice, or that without apology forgiveness is not possible or would be harmful to the victim. Therefore

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<sup>356</sup> Data from interview on October 18, 2008 in Rwamagana, Rwanda.

<sup>357</sup> All three retreats I observed drew people from nearby villages and towns, and there was no communal lodging. I did not confirm whether this is typically the case for AEE, although I suspect it is because many retreats draw on local groups and because the expense would normally be quite prohibitive. The women's retreat I attended had several shared meals, which were filled with laughter and many requests for photographs. The women piled huge amounts of food on their plates, saying it was the only meal they would eat for a day or two.

<sup>358</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

considerable time is paid to understanding the concept of *biblical* forgiveness -- the giving of an “undeserved” gift, and the laying down of judgment and revenge, committing it all to the “Just Judge” in heaven, as Jesus did (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010, p. 54-55). The spiritual and psychological costs of unforgiveness are also covered in various way. At all three retreats I attended the point was made that unforgiveness keeps the wounded person bound to the person they hate, blocking her from healing and personal freedom, and “giving Satan a foothold” in her life (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010, p. 55). The message is that only through “discovering Jesus as redeemer” (i.e. finding the Light in the darkness) that a person can find the grace to forgive. As Lloyd (1998) states:

Instead of working against us, God can even make these worst tragedies work for us, so that we can continue living having been enriched within. Holding on to the bigger picture of God being able to redeem everything gives us hope to face the future.

Having developed the teachings on the importance of biblical forgiveness, AEE retreat leaders then turn to the critical teachings on repentance. It is in this set of teachings that *all* participants are encouraged to start holding themselves accountable for wrongs both major and minor. Repentance for thoughts and attitudes (such as hatred, resentment or prejudice) is as crucial in the AEE view as repentance for actions such as murder or theft (Lloyd, 1998). At the three retreats I attended, to varying degrees retreat leaders emphasized the importance of everyone having something to repent for, whether a killer filled with guilt, or a husband who is cold to his wife out of resentment for her success.<sup>359</sup> Here, true repentance is characterized as a profound change of mind and heart; a heartfelt effort to restore relationship; and most importantly, taking responsibility without excuse or avoidance of consequences.<sup>360</sup> In Rwanda,

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<sup>359</sup> The latter was an example from the teachers’ retreat, where the facilitator drew many examples from family life rather than from incidences of violence. At the women’s retreat (where all participants were survivors of rape) the teachings on repentance were quite a bit softer than at the other two retreats, and the point was made multiple times that the women did NOT need to repent for the sins committed against them, and therefore the focus was more on their redemption through Jesus (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009).

<sup>360</sup> These characteristics are gleaned from multiple approaches at the retreats I attended, and confirmed in from Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010, p. 57-58).

where many Hutu have refused to ask forgiveness for fear of the potential consequences, this is a particularly salient lesson, as Francois describes:

Once we have had our healing at the cross, we can start to forgive. Even the offenders, they are wounded because they have killed and so on...so we believe that on the Cross everyone has room for his pain, whatever the cause, even if you are the source...Jesus is waiting; he doesn't mind who comes to him, be he a criminal or whatever...Before they come to the Cross, they are afraid, they don't know what to do. They think if I ask for forgiveness, I will suffer the consequences, I will be going to prison. I am free now, if I say that I may go to prison, I may have to repair what I destroyed. And some are even still angry! And also planning to do more killings. So, after they have come to the Cross, it really heals them, after they have had that relationship with God, they are able to ask for forgiveness, they do not fear the consequences, because they say now I have been forgiven, whether prison or death, so I must go in any case. Before healing takes place it is impossible to ask for forgiveness and it is also impossible to forgive.<sup>361</sup>

It is at this juncture in an AEE retreat that a socio-politically and theologically remarkable teaching occurs. This teaching is around the biblical concept of “standing in the gap” for a group of people before God and/or other people; taking ownership for their corporate sins and transgressions and thus choosing to “be numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). As Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010, p. 62) write, “This idea was well understood by the old testament prophets, especially Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. They were righteous people who chose to be identified with sinners in order to confess the sins of their people.” The term “Standing in the gap” comes from Ezekiel 22:30, but it is also reflected in other biblical stories such as that of Abigail standing in the gap for her husband Nabal; Moses for the Israelites; Daniel for the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and especially Jesus for all of humanity on the Cross.<sup>362</sup> By standing in the gap for a corporate group (also called “identificational repentance” at AEE), a person can cast himself and the entire group on God’s mercy.<sup>363</sup> “It is not something legal, but something

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<sup>361</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>362</sup> Ezekiel 22:30 reads: “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and *stand before me in the gap* on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”

<sup>363</sup> Steward (2009) describes Lloyd’s own experiences with identificational repentance practices in Northern Ireland. Lloyd herself has often “stood in the gap” for the West’s oppression of Africa and inaction during the genocide. Nyamutera (n.d.) summarizes Lloyd’s statement: “I want to stand before you as a representative of Europeans who came to Africa, stole your wealth, turned you into slaves who had to be taken to foreign lands on

divine, which gives an opportunity for grace and mercy to flow, and triumph over judgment” (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010, p. 63).

The importance of identificational repentance at AEE is that there have been many sins committed in Rwanda that will never be repented, and therefore forgiveness is more difficult in the human realm. Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010, p. 64) explain the importance of identificational repentance more concisely than any of the leaders at the retreats I attended:

The greatest wounding against mankind is the result of sins committed by a corporate body – governments, cultures, ethnic groups, institutions, churches and so on – not by individuals. The problem is that even though we are part of the corporate body, we tend to excuse ourselves from taking personal responsibility. The corporate sins are never owned or confessed, with the result that the wounds are not healed and the conflict is not resolved.

Standing in the gap at an AEE retreat did not appear to be something to take lightly. As Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010) describe, an “intercessor” must be willing to confess fully and clearly, showing their deep grief at what has happened, with no equivocation, justification, or diminishment of the wrongs committed. They must convey the following sentiments (p.63):

- I accept that what we did was wrong.
- I accept that the other people’s group was wounded.
- ...I don’t agree with what was done, but I must not come in pride, because I accept that I am also capable of the same sin.
- I deeply regret what took place and cry out to God for mercy.
- I commit myself to living out of a different spirit.

Standing in the gap can come at considerable personal cost, as Lloyd and Nyamutera (2010) note. It can lead to opposition, judgment, or rejection by one’s own or the other’s corporate

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terrible ships to be sold as things. I want also to confess the sin of exploitation during the colonial time; you were also deprived of your dignity. Your culture was considered rubbish. I want also to stand as a missionary in need of your forgiveness because *though missionaries came with good intentions*, they still conveyed a lie, that we [whites] are superior. In the end I want to apologize for the role of Europe in planting the seed of divisions which led to the terrible genocide which plunged Rwanda into terrible suffering” (emphasis added to note the hedging on missionary intentions). Steward (2009, p. 184) writes, “For some Rwandans, these apologies constituted a statement of solidarity and concern that, albeit belated, affected them deeply, and provided a sense of comfort that, in retrospect, some Westerners did care about what had happened in Rwanda.”

group. In Rwanda today, standing in the gap for Hutu would entail certain social and political risks, but standing in the gap for the Tutsi is particularly risky.<sup>364</sup> Although I certainly heard stories of participants standing in the gap for their entire corporate group at retreats, the only such actions I witnessed were retreat leaders doing so.<sup>365</sup> For example, here is a Hutu retreat leader talking about the first time he heard his Tutsi co-leader stand in the gap for the Tutsi:

Then, I could not believe it -- Anastase stood before us to ask our forgiveness. He said, "Our forefathers sinned against you during the Tutsi monarchy. We mistreated you like slaves. We stole from you your dignity as human beings. We kept you from having the fruits of your labor and treated you as if you were animals. I stand before you to ask your forgiveness on behalf of the Tutsi." The Hutu in the room could not believe this! Some were crying, and others were saying, "Eh! How can this be?" You see, we do not expect to be forgiven for our sins against the Tutsi, so we have not even asked! But this Tutsi repenting...people went forward to extend forgiveness to him straight away. And begging his forgiveness for what Hutu have done....they were crying and hugging after that. I have never been the same since then – the world is changed for me now.

Francois tells about the importance to him of standing in the gap for Hutu when he leads retreats:

I am a Hutu and I have to repent of all the ways we have sinned against the Tutsi. We refused you the right to live in your own country. We made laws to keep you from going to school or getting positions. We massacred you many times and always blamed you for sins that belonged to us. I beg your forgiveness for the genocide of 1994, when our people tried to exterminate your people, and all the cruelty we visited upon you. The rape. The torture. This impaling of people...burying people alive, throwing them in [latrines]. Before God we are worthy of His every curse and condemnation. We ask your forgiveness and that the blood of Jesus on the cross will cover us....<sup>366</sup>

For many participants, "standing in the gap" was the most memorable part of an AEE retreat, and

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<sup>364</sup> Although standing in the gap for Tutsi in regards to colonial or pre-colonial oppression of Hutu is risky, standing in the gap for the RPF atrocities against Hutu could be quite dangerous. I only witnessed and heard of the first type of confession, not the latter.

<sup>365</sup> Joseph Nyamutera (n.d.) reflects on "standing in the gap" in his personal story: "In the case of Rwanda, many victims will never know who really killed their people. But still they need someone who will take responsibility and say: 'Forgive us!' ...The world is full of impersonal violence. Maybe you belong to a group of people who is responsible for the suffering of another group? What they need to hear from you is not justifications, not reminding the other group of their own wrong, not projecting responsibilities (thus distancing yourself from those who did it), but the most meaningful thing, the most healing, beneficial thing for yourself and the victim, the most restoring, divinely recommended statement is this: 'Forgive us!'"

<sup>366</sup> In fact, Francois encouraged me to stand in the gap at the second retreat for the West's actions towards Rwanda but the leader of the retreat didn't make time for it to happen. I did "stand in the gap" in a sense at a PCR retreat.

indeed for me as a researcher it was nothing short of stunning.<sup>367</sup> I was particularly touched by the practice at the women's retreat, where the Hutu leader wept and choked through a painfully remorseful confession about how badly the women had been wounded.<sup>368</sup> At the other two retreats, those who had not yet felt that they could forgive someone from the other group now felt that it was "a very easy thing to do," or realized that "we're all the same," or felt encouraged that "we have cleansed the sins of our fathers."<sup>369</sup> As Francois says, it is so important for people to see that at least one person of the other group can confess:

So really that is when the Tutsi started to think if a Hutu can say this, maybe we can forgive them. So, really it helps people to make that statement, when you stand in the gap, because they say at least if one person can put it in words and acknowledge it, there may be others who can see it and say it too, and we are able to forgive.<sup>370</sup>

Finally, the roof of the house is reconciliation. This is the end to which all of the retreat activities are leading, although in effect it has already started happening before this time in the retreat. People who were distrustful or distant from each other at the beginning of the retreat were noticeably more animated with each other, hugging and smiling and (as with PCR) rushing up to me to tell me of their experiences of healing. At the women's retreat, where those present were already of the same ethnic group, some of their expressions of reconciliation were about recognizing how profoundly wounded the rapists also are, and that they were "not to be judged by those here on earth" but to "have mercy for them as they [would] face the Just Judge in heaven."<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Steward (2009, p. 185) reflects on how uncommon and impactful the standing in the gap practice is: "This profoundly touched many Hutu participants. Such statements and apologies are extremely rare in Rwanda....The impact of dual apologies was often deep, moving participants from blaming one another to facing the truth of what the members of their own group had done, or desired to do, to the other group. According to many participants, stating these truths brought a feeling of relief and release."

<sup>368</sup> Many women of rape in Rwanda state that the rapists rarely admit what they have done, and therefore the victims have heard very few apologies or requests for forgiveness. Even the Hutu leader who 'stood in the gap' for the Hutu who had abused the survivors at the first retreat was a bit circumspect and apparently a bit uncomfortable associating himself with the deeds of the rapists (data from fieldnotes, 2007-2009).

<sup>369</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>370</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>371</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 2007.

Towards the end of the AEE retreat, teachings turn back to the biblical idea of the Holy Nation and “celebrating our unity and diversity” (Lloyd and Nyamutera, 2010, p. 67). This is the call to be “clothed with a higher identity than tribal (national) identity,” where all Rwandans can become members of His nation. A series of teachings and activities occur, including: blessing those from other ethnic groups; exploring the church as an agent of healing and reconciliation in Rwanda; and specific actions that can be taken to spread the work they have begun to their local communities and to the nation more broadly. Many pairings of Hutu and Tutsi AEE retreat participants have gone on to preach reconciliation across the country, while other individuals initiate activities in their local communities.<sup>372</sup> After several months, the participants come back together for two days, to explore their work in reconciliation and support each other through difficulties they are facing. Two or three people from each group are invited to attend training for to become AEE facilitators so that they later become local leaders of AEE retreats. At any one time in Rwanda, there are 17-18 local facilitation teams for AEE, each of which conducts about four retreats a year.<sup>373</sup> Local leaders tailor the retreats to locally identified needs; if the local team determines that more church-based reconciliation is needed, they may work through church leaders. If there are many orphans in need, they may go through orphan support groups to find participants who are ready and willing to attend.

### *Key Aspects of the Retreat Approach*

In closing the description of the AEE healing and reconciliation retreat, it is important to highlight several aspects of AEE’s approach that might otherwise be obscured in the discussion. First, AEE (like PCR) is clearly a Christian evangelical organization, although AEE leaders

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<sup>372</sup> Specific data on this statement was difficult to find, although the proliferation of programs of all kinds that were begun by former retreat participants and are at least nominally associated with AEE would seem to indicate that retreats do in fact generate many spin-off reconciliation efforts.

<sup>373</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

appear to vary in their fervor.<sup>374</sup> AEE initially based its approach on the belief that it is the church that must heal Rwanda, and therefore that church leaders (i.e., “wounded healers”) must be healed for national healing to occur.

AEE retreats are heavily imbued with Bible study, and personal and communal prayer and contemplation, but they are also highly experiential, employing ceremonies and rituals to “bring the whole person to healing.”<sup>375</sup> They do employ a moderate degree of cognitive engagement, by relying on a series of teachings and readings, but also employ affective engagement at many critical junctures throughout a retreat (e.g. reflection on personal wounds, empathetic listening to the wounds of others, and so on). Indeed, AEE’s retreat model is not only derived from theological concepts, but it is derived from the trauma counseling background of its primary founder, Lloyd. The psychological and individualistic underpinnings of a retreat are reflected in the multiple teachings on the psychological and emotional costs of unforgiveness; the origins of human division; the importance of childhood wounds in distorting one’s relationship with God; and most notably with the core concept that a person must *express* his or her pain to be healed from it.

Pedagogically, AEE retreats follow a distinct progression (represented by the metaphor of a house) that builds each stage on all those before it. Although at root the facilitation is meant to be personally empowering and the retreats small and intimate communities, there appears to be a great deal of variance in the way retreats are run and facilitated. For example, at the teachers’ retreat in this study, participants sat in rows of schoolchildren’s chairs while the retreat leader lectured from a raised platform. He tossed his chalk in the air, sometimes writing things on the chalkboard and occasionally “quizzing” the participants on what they had heard or understood.

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<sup>374</sup> AEE apparently welcomes Muslims and atheists to its retreats, although these participants would have to accommodate the very Christian curriculum (data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda).

<sup>375</sup> Data from interview with Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.



He was considerably younger than the teachers present, and would have been a young child during the genocide, while many of the participants were parents who had lost their children. He answered his phone during important ceremonies, and pressed me for assistance in studying at an American University during breaks. While Francois (the AEE reconciliation ministry leader who accompanied me to this retreat) expressed some dismay at the leader's lack of maturity and expertise, he noted he was "about average" for an AEE facilitator and let him continue without comment. This despite the fact that several people stopped coming to the retreat altogether and others arrived many minutes late for every activity.<sup>376</sup>

In contrast, at the other two retreats, participants were seated in a large circle, and leaders floated in the middle of the circle as they spoke. Participants were given sufficient time to contemplate their suffering and to share it with one another. These retreats were led by men with evident maturity, experience, and humility. For example, few things I have seen in Rwanda compare to the tenderness with which I saw the Hutu retreat leader at the first retreat speak to the women survivors present. Indeed, I found all the national leaders of AEE to be exceedingly mature, humble, and driven by a sincere commitment to reconciliation in Rwanda. I therefore developed the impression that by disseminating its approach so widely, AEE has really promoted local ownership of the reconciliation process, but it may have also lost some degree of control over the quality of its retreats.<sup>377</sup>

### *Findings (AEE)*

As reflected in the above description of AEE healing and reconciliation retreats, many of the impressions I formed about an AEE retreat were gained from observing the retreats, while other impressions were formed in interviews with retreat participants and leaders. These were then compared to the documentary information I collected on AEE (see Table 5.3 above), which was utilized quite extensively to explicate an otherwise jumbled set of impressions from very

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<sup>376</sup> Data from fieldnotes, August 1, 2008.

<sup>377</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2007-2009).

dissimilar retreats. This section summarizes the interview data in describing the impact of an AEE retreat on participants.

In my analyzing the AEE interview data, a number of key themes arose, either because their corresponding code(s) occurred so often that they warranted a closer look; because several codes shaped the development of one particular theme; or because they were particularly interesting in light of the theoretical foundation of this study. In a few cases the name of the theme arose directly from expressions of retreat participants (e.g., “feeling human again”). The themes discussed here fall into two categories, which themselves represent roughly the “before” and “after” effects of an AEE retreat.<sup>378</sup> The first category includes themes that reflect participants’ experiences coming in to the retreats; and the second category includes themes that reflect program impacts, because participants identify them as results of the AEE retreat itself. Exemplary quotations are provided for each of the themes within each category.<sup>379</sup>

#### *Themes: Participants’ Experiences*

Likely due to the preponderance of retrospective interview data at AEE, there are only two predominant themes that reflect the experiences of participants coming into the AEE retreats, which include: pain of violence and division; and family wounds.<sup>380</sup>

*Pain of violence and division.* It is of course not unusual in Rwanda to hear stories of great loss and suffering, and AEE retreats are no exception, as they are designed to attract people of sometimes opposing identities who are suffering and need to be healed. Hatred and resentment against the other ethnicity was quite commonly expressed, as with Lisbeth, a Tutsi

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<sup>378</sup> I observed different portions of three different retreats, and many of my interviews occurred quite spontaneously during or at the ends of retreats, and some interviewees had attended retreats previously. Therefore, all accounts of experiences were given by interviewees in a retrospective manner.

<sup>379</sup> The methods of coding and comparing data sources to each other was described in Chapter Four and will not be repeated here.

<sup>380</sup> “Pain of violence and division” was created out of “hatred of self/in-group” and “hatred of other.” “Family wounds” was a seldom-used code but its presence in contrast to all other three programs seemed to warrant attention.

returnee from DRC, who said:

Since my childhood, I have always been taught to see every Hutu as an enemy. I hated them with all my heart, and viewed them as...so, basically evil people. My father and grandfather had always told me stories of the terrible things the Hutu did to us in 1959, and the reasons for which we were forced to live in a land where nobody wanted us and we did not even have citizenship. But I was powerless to do anything about my anger, being only a woman.

On the other side of the divide, quite a number of Hutu expressed hatred for Tutsi, as for example with Claudette:

Before the reconciliation workshop, I did not see clearly that I was very bitter about ethnicity, and I also had pride for my own Christian denomination. When it came to the Cross workshop, I realized that I had a very heavy thing to give to Jesus...We were told to write down the pain we had experienced in our lives, but I could only think of one. I wrote down there "I hate Tutsi." I hated them because they put my father in prison, and life became very difficult after that.<sup>381</sup>

It was very common (at AEE and beyond) to hear interviewees talk about how badly they wanted to revenge the deaths of their loved ones, as for instance with Jean-Paul, who lost over 60 people in his extended family, most importantly his father:

I felt an unbearable pain and heaviness in my heart. I joined the army so that I could revenge the murder of my father. You see, I felt if I did not join the army, I might be punished, but I only wanted to kill that Hutu who killed my father. There was nothing I wanted more than to kill that man. Can you imagine? I was so disappointed (laughs) when I discovered that Hutu was in prison and I could not kill him!

Among Hutu interviewees, it was not uncommon to hear expressions of self-disgust as one of the Hutu community, such as Frederic who simply said: "I didn't ever pick up a machete, but I saw what was happening, and in my heart I was a killer just like those who had the machetes. Now my heart has been relieved and I am changed." In another example, Patrick recalls Hutu killing his moderate Hutu father:

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<sup>381</sup> As previously discussed, "inter- and intra-church divisions" was a theme at PCR. Although there were expressions of such conflicts at AEE, they were not as frequent and were usually blended into passages about ethnic conflict.

I am a Hutu. But I hated the Hutu. In 1959 my father was one man who preached peace between the communities, and they killed him. In 1994, my brothers were killed in the first days of the genocide, although they were not even political. I was very angry at the Hutu and now I can see that I had a poison in my heart....The workshop has delivered me from this pain that I feel and the anger I had directed against my own community.

AEE retreats often bring perpetrators and survivors together, and the perpetrators bring their own kind of pain. Innocent talks about how his feelings of shame at his actions drove him to confess to the government, before he even came to the AEE retreat:

I felt so much shame at what I had done. I did not ever want to leave prison because of what I had done. I didn't know how I would ever face the families of those I had killed. I was without any peace in my heart.

In a less common kind of expression, Joseph Nyamutera (n.d.) reflects on a blend of shame at being Hutu with anger at the Tutsi in a written reflection:

[After fleeing to the Congo], cholera welcomed us and I myself, Esther and most of my extended family almost died. After my father, my own firstborn son Gospel, my sister Alphonsine and ten thousands of men or women were piled up as wood, then taken to mass-graves as rubbish, all the shame and guilt of belonging to a tribe of mass murderers on the run trying to escape justice, were replaced by anger and pointing the finger of accusation against God and Tutsis....[Later, when we returned to Rwanda], though I had heard so much about the RPF, it was the first time I actually saw RPF soldiers. Though the government did its best to guarantee our safety and to make us feel welcome, some angry Tutsi simply kidnapped our brother and killed him. Until today, we do not know where he was buried. All of us were so discouraged that we could not envisage any future.

*Family wounds.* Although it was relatively uncommon to hear reflections on wounds from family background or childhood, participants at the retreats seemed (from body language and audible murmurs) relatively responsive to the AEE teaching that their ideas about God would have been derived from their families, and therefore might be distorted and a source of pain and isolation for them. Although it was notable that interviewees mentioned childhood wounds at all (this does not seem to be at all typical for Rwanda), it was almost always in passing and in the abstract. However, Nyamutera (n.d.) offers a lengthy (and quite specific) reflection on his own process of coming to terms with his childhood wounds, and concludes:

The most interesting part [about my first workshop] was about discovering God as a Father. This had nothing to do with ethnicity, so I really received much healing from my harsh upbringing, and could forgive my father who did not receive love himself.

*Themes: Program Impacts*

A number of codes developed in the process of analyzing the interview data reflected the perceived impacts of the program, as identified by the participants themselves. As there were many different codes, they were merged into the most salient themes for ease of discussion.<sup>382</sup> In particular, because one of the three retreats was for women who had been raped, a number of codes in the general area of improved self-esteem arose, and these stand as distinct from, and precede, all the others. Themes for program impacts include: restored self-esteem; feeling human again; compassion for self and other; role of repentance in forgiveness; unity; greater mission in life; and working together for reconciliation. Finally, because some participants described having to attend multiple retreats to feel fully healed, an additional theme entitled “learning across multiple retreats” appears at the end of the others.

*Restored self-esteem.* For the first retreat in particular, where the participants were all survivors and victims of rape, there were many expressions about being cleansed, regaining value, feeling alive again, and feeling human. These were generally preceded by reflections about lacking all hygiene or care for the self; or about being silenced. For example, Eugenie describes her experience after the genocide:

After the genocide, I didn't feel the interest to bathe or put the clothing on myself well. I felt it was impossible to live again without my husband, and no man would ever want me again....A woman in Rwanda without her husband is lost. Worse was I felt I had lost the

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<sup>382</sup> The quotations for “feeling valued,” “reason to live again,” and some of the quotations for “feeling human again” that came from interviews with raped women were merged into “restored self-esteem,” while those quotations from “feeling human again” that were *not* from rape victims were kept under the theme by that name. “Compassion for self and other” came from merging codes for “compassion for self” and “compassion for other,” and sub-codes of each. “Forgiveness” and “repentance/standing in the gap” were merged to the “role of repentance in forgiveness,” for reasons explained in text. “Unity” was formed with “unity,” “larger identity in Christ,” and “one family.” And “greater mission in life” and “working for reconciliation” were unchanged from their originating codes.

heart of Christ, because it was Christians who did this to us....But I have met the servants of God at this seminar...It is helping to heal the brokenness I have felt – now I am simply happy to be alive.<sup>383</sup>

Fidela, who had attended her first retreat in 2003, describes her process of bringing many women survivors together:

I went to a healing and reconciliation workshop in 2003. I was one among many women living with AIDS after violation, and my shame was total. I had absolutely no value in our culture...as a woman who no longer has a husband and who has been violated in bestial ways...before the genocide, I was a strong member of my community, and my husband was respected. After the genocide I was silent, I could not even speak. But eventually the healing at the Cross happened and I decided to start this group for women like me. Most of us had lost all the children and we were left with AIDS. These stories were very very hard for all of us to hear, but also we knew we were not alone. Rape is not a thing we can talk about in Rwanda, it's not so easy....And so we began by praying together. Some could not even talk, and had no interest in life or in keeping themselves clean. Then we saw that prayers could not be enough, we needed to work together. So we split into small groups and invited women from many other churches together....Many of our meetings were about how to value ourselves again, because some women are very damaged. But we are more accepted by others now that we are together. Our dream is to help the other widows in the area who don't have the means yet. There are so many of them, those that were raped and living with AIDS. They feel shame and the feeling of being devalued and so appreciate people like you coming to visit and valuing them.<sup>384</sup>

Perpetua also shares her experience:

I used to close all the doors and windows of the house and would not even clean my clothes or oil my skin. I was certain that I was no longer lovable, that I was no longer a human being. Even after a while, I had to clean, but I have not felt a purpose for living...even when I leave the house, I only walk places without really knowing where I am going. Here I have realized I am not the only one. I have been thinking that life is over, I thought life was over, but now I know it is not. This has been a journey from despair to hope, God has given me hope again.<sup>385</sup>

Odetta, a smiling woman I met one day at the AEE headquarters, told me of her healing at her

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<sup>383</sup> Data from interview on July 15, 2007 in Nyamata, Rwanda.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

first reconciliation workshop, alluding to rape in a passing way as she spoke of the relief the Cross brought to her:

Up until the Cross workshop, and even when we were learning that Jesus is here to carry all our pain AND all our sins, I did not think it was possible for anyone, even God, to carry all the sorrow that I felt...But when I realized in that workshop that Jesus can carry my sorrows, I was so relieved and I cried so much. It was as if a burden was already lifted from me to hear those words. So, when it was my turn to go to the Cross and nail my little paper there, that paper that told about the deaths of my children, and the violation of my own body...the dreams that I had to become a nurse, and the destruction of my home...(laughs) well all of those things! I nailed them right to the Cross and I said, Jesus, please help me carry these!...I cannot find words to describe what relief I have felt since that moment. And after some time, I realized that I have to help bring this relief, this blessing from Jesus, to other people in our country. So, that was when I decided to become a facilitator for AEE.<sup>386</sup>

*Feeling human again.* The experience of “feeling human again” was not limited to the rape victims, but also to survivors and perpetrators more generally, such as Jean-Claude, a perpetrator who was addressing a member of his victim’s family before the entire group at the third retreat:

I was afraid to meet you here, and I have been a hostage to my fear. I have been living like a wild animal but your forgiveness has freed me and I feel that I am a human being again and I must thank you very much. I feel I can live I in this world again, to live in my own country as a Rwandan again.<sup>387</sup>

Similarly, Pascal, a Tutsi survivor and now an AEE retreat leader, reflects back on his first retreat:

When we sat in that small group and shared our wounds, I wept so many tears. By the third day of the workshop, I had heard some incredible testimonies from those people I had hated before. This helped me to understand their pain, and to cry for them. Crying for them also gave me such relief in my heart. Later, I brought all my burdens to the Cross, and I gave them to Jesus. From that time forward, I felt “I am a human being again.”<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Data from interview on September 7, 2008 in Kigali Rwanda.

<sup>387</sup> Data from interview on October 19, 2008 in Rwamagana, Rwanda.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

*Compassion for self and other.* Feeling compassion for others that one had hated before was a very common theme, but was hard in most cases to extricate from other important themes reflected in the passage. One discrete example is shown by Pascal's statement (directly above), while another is shown by David's retrospective account:

I came to my first healing and reconciliation workshop by the invitation of a friend in the church. I had no idea what he was taking me to see! (Laughs) I was very angry at him when we arrived, when I could see what it was all about. But I stayed because I was curious what these Hutu had to say for themselves....I did not suspect anything they could say would change my heart....When they divided us into small groups, I was with one Hutu woman and she told me the things that had happened to her in Congo...I was truly and profoundly touched. I felt that what she went through was worse than what I went through, and from that moment on, my life really began to change.<sup>389</sup>

In contrast to the data on compassion for the other, interview data on *compassion for self* was quite a bit more elusive. There are good reasons to view compassion for the self as an integral part of an AEE retreat: it is built into the curriculum with the self-reflection on wounds and the sharing of one's pain with others; it is described as an important outcome of an AEE retreat by the designers of the model; and it is reflected in the many sobs and tears I heard coming from the small group meetings. Furthermore the theoretical base of the study also warranted a code for "compassion for self." Yet, apart from passing comments that participants had never told their stories at such length before, when I analyzed the quotations under this code, I did not find any interviews or personal testimonials that showed a person expressing the importance of experiencing their *own* suffering at the retreat. Strangely, in all of the documentation about AEE retreats -- Lloyd & Nyamutera (2010); Lloyd (1998); Nyamutera (n.d.); Lloyd et al (2010); Steward (2009); and Larson (2009) -- I was only able to find one reference of this kind. Steward (2009, p. 186) summarizes briefly the experience of one Tutsi woman at an AEE retreat:

Three of my children died. One after another we buried them in a forest near the church. I was

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<sup>389</sup> Data from interview on July 15, 2007 in Nyamata, Rwanda.



afraid to visit that burial site – even to look there...After the seminar everybody offered to go with me to the grave site.

This is perhaps to be expected with Rwandan culture, as noted previously in the expression, “A man’s tears should run into his stomach.” Therefore, even without interview data to support it, this study does find sufficient reason to suggest that one outcome of an AEE healing and reconciliation retreat is the experience of compassion for the self.

*The impact of repentance on forgiveness.* There were many mentions of forgiveness in the interview data, and forgiveness could be its own theme. However, the connection of forgiveness to important events in the retreat (specifically repentance or “identificational repentance”) was quite strong and indicative of something unique to AEE, so they are presented as an interconnected theme here. Perhaps most predictably, the experience of Tutsi forgiving after Hutu identificational repentance is reflected in John’s story:

When Peter shared about the death of his mother, his brother and his nieces in the refugee camp, I did not feel any compassion in my heart. That is because I considered them to be the cause of our misery! When he said that his wife was killed by Tutsi when he came back from Congo, I wished they had killed all of them! But the next day he repented on behalf of all Hutu...he said we are sorry for killing you...we beg forgiveness for raping and torture...for throwing your loved ones in the latrines while they were suffering...I felt my heart, it broke open and love flowed inside of me at that moment. You see, it is such a relief to have a person say in a loud voice, to declare, “Yes, you have suffered so much, and we, we are the cause of that suffering!” I humbled myself before God and him, and I have asked his forgiveness too...I told him I am sorry that we too took revenge and killed your people. I am sorry that we have refused to acknowledge your suffering.<sup>390</sup>

On the other hand, the Hutu at a retreat were nothing short of shocked when a Tutsi “stood in the gap” for the suffering Hutu had endured at the hands of the Tutsi. For example, Damescene:

It was unbelievable to me that any Tutsi would ever repent. All this time, I thought those Tutsi will pile every insult and injury on us and then demand that we pay only for their suffering. The shame I feel for what happened to the Tutsi is very big, but it does not erase our suffering. For a Tutsi to say that the Tutsi have harmed us was too much for me to believe. I did not believe my ears! I looked around the room to see if others heard

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<sup>390</sup> Data from interview on October 19, 2008 in Rwamagana, Rwanda.

what I heard, and it was true....When he did that, standing in front of all of us, he prayed and begged our forgiveness with tears on his face....I found that I was also willing to repent of my sins. There is so much peace in repentance, in saying what you did to hurt others. With this peace, if we can feel it here, I now believe that reconciliation is possible. If there is one man like this, there may be hundreds of others like him in Rwanda!<sup>391</sup>

Finally, among those who had been wounded by inter-church conflict, there were also expressions of forgiveness following repentance by self or other, such as Samuel reflecting back on a retreat he had attended previously:

I was really touched during the Cross workshop and I put all the evil I'd done to the other congregation on the cross....I believed myself to be reconciled then....I knew Daniel was at the same retreat but I did not expect him to admit his sins, and I did not intend to declare my sins against his church....but then he declared them publicly! I had no choice then but to confess everything that I had done (laughing). Since that moment, Daniel and I have gone back to our community and there we have publicly confessed and given our testimonies about our healing...that the hatred between us is gone now. A lot of fruit comes from our work together....there is a lot of interest to bring this message of healing to our community.<sup>392</sup>

*Unity.* Although there were typically not long reflections on unity in the interviews or at the retreats, feeling unified under a greater identity than Hutu and Tutsi (especially under Christ) was frequently expressed, as for example with one of the teachers, Odette: “The seminar had a big impact on my life. Tribe is not important, skin color is not important, ethnicity or nation, these are not important. There is only one nation, God’s nation, and we all belong in it.”<sup>393</sup> At times the feeling of unity was expressed more in stories of Tutsi families adopting Hutu or vice-versa, as with Dancilla:

At the workshop, knowing that I no longer had parents and that I was myself parents to my younger siblings, Clement, the Tutsi pastor, told me to come live with his family in Nyamata. When I went to see him in Nyamata, his wife took me into their home like my mother even though I am a Hutu. She loves me so much, like my mother, who loved me very much before. They have always treated me like their own child since then, and they

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<sup>391</sup> Data from interview on October 19, 2008 in Rwamagana, Rwanda.

<sup>392</sup> Data from interview on July 15, 2007 in Nyamata, Rwanda.

<sup>393</sup> Data from interview on September 7, 2008 in Kigali Rwanda.

are kind to me as they are to their own children. My siblings also are welcomed in their home and we are one family under one roof.<sup>394</sup>

*Greater mission in life.* Especially when taken together with the theme of “working for reconciliation,” perhaps no theme was more frequently represented in the interview and observational data than that of deriving a greater mission in life from the experience of the healing and reconciliation retreats. Such frequency may be due to AEE’s concerted efforts to spread the healing and reconciliation approach as widely as possible. The idea that they were meant for bigger work was expressed by everyone from Francois, who felt specifically that his God-given work is to “stand in the gap” for the Hutu and heal Tutsi hearts, to Fidela, the women’s group leader who said:

We women who have been healed through these workshops, we take on many orphans and are proud of providing homes for those who have none. We are leaving a legacy....God put something in our hearts and that is the work he saved us for. We are here to say all human beings are human beings....If one of them is alone and sad, the others are sad and alone in their hearts....We believe we will be a medicine to other people’s hearts.<sup>395</sup>

*Working together for reconciliation.* Many AEE participants go on to work for reconciliation in their communities, as is the intention of AEE’s reconciliation ministry. It is not at all uncommon to hear stories of victims and the perpetrators of crimes against them traveling the country to promote healing and reconciliation, although I personally did not meet any such pair. Various AEE leaders recounted such stories to me. Additionally, Rwanda Partners (a major supporter of AEE’s reconciliation ministry) and LeRucher (the organization Lloyd and Nyamutera now lead) post such stories on their websites, the former in starkly posed “perpetrator/ victim” pairs.<sup>396</sup> As just one example among many, Francois tells the story of two AEE leaders working in the Bugesera:

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<sup>394</sup> Data from informal interview, November 2008, in Kigali Rwanda.

<sup>395</sup> Data from interview on October 19, 2008 in Rwamagana, Rwanda.

<sup>396</sup> However the Rwanda Partners site has been revamped and no longer provides access to those testimonies. Stating “victim” and “perpetrator” in such stark ways may serve to sharpen a dichotomy that is not appropriate in the cultural or historical context of Rwanda.

I remember a case in Bugesera, I gave a seminar and the killer of a man's father in law's family, so they met there, and when he mentioned that he was asking for forgiveness and the other, the survivor got up, he was really touched and he went and hugged him, forgave him. And they have been traveling all over the place teaching, they live together, they sleep together, work together the families are together, all that. That is one case but many other cases have taken place.<sup>397</sup>

*Learning across multiple retreats:* As with PCR, but to a lesser extent, AEE retreat participants sometimes mentioned having to do multiple retreats before they felt the full value of the healing. Odette, the smiling woman I met in the AEE headquarters, told this part of her story:

I lost my parents, my husband, and every one of my eight children in the genocide, and my very first born was buried alive. I really had no reason, no reason, to live. In 1996, my church sent me to a healing seminar, and there we were invited to cry, but I could not because the memories were too bad and I did not want to recollect them. I went to another seminar, and also two more in the next three years. But I was not able to talk. Then at one seminar, maybe it was the fifth one, I was blessed with tears at last. I cried and cried and could not stop crying (laughing) when they taught about the Holy Nation and the King's Table. And then Joseph [Nyamutera] crowned me....eh, you know Joseph!? Well you know he is a Hutu from the northwest, and that really opened my heart to Hutu after that day. I started to share my story and now I can say I am really healed.<sup>398</sup>

Francois also mentioned to me that the process may take many retreats over years for it to really have its full affect:

There is another one at the last seminar who said I will never forgive that man who said he would slaughter my unborn child, but he is always asking about that child now. But she said "I will never forgive him." But in the end of the workshop she came up with other people who had been touched and wanted to be prayed for and she came and she knelt down and she said, "I am even able to forgive Naranzamba." Even that one who said she could never forgive. Sometimes the process goes on days or months after the seminar, you hear someone has kept the processing, and is now free, she was able to forgive someone and keeping on praying and making follow up.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Data from interview of Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007.

<sup>398</sup> Data from interview on September 7, 2008 in Kigali Rwanda.

<sup>399</sup> Data from interview of Francois, healing and reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007.

### *Political Considerations (AEE)*

In many respects, the political considerations of importance with AEE are quite similar to those for PCR (as described previously) and for Christian evangelical groups more broadly in Rwanda (as described in Chapter Two). However, in a few key respects AEE stands apart from other Christian reconciliation organizations. To simplify the topic and to avoid repetition of material covered in Chapter Two, discussion here is limited to comparison and contrast between AEE and PCR along the four lines of consideration found in the PCR case report. These include: AEE's role as one of many organizations promoting unity and reconciliation; its mission as an evangelical organization; its position on critical issues in Rwandan politics and history; and its direct relations with the government. Each of these aspects is introduced briefly here, and will be referred to in later analysis.

First, AEE is one of “numerous associations and interfaith groups...that are contribut[ing] to understanding and tolerance among various religious groups” in Rwanda today.<sup>400</sup> Even more than PCR, AEE's national and local leaders participate actively in groups, such as the Interfaith Commission for Rwanda, that “support programs aimed at reconciling genocide survivors, released genocide prisoners, and genocide detainees' families.”<sup>401</sup> In particular, the Team Leader (and now Chairman of the Board of Directors) for AEE for most of my fieldwork period was Antoine Rutayisire, a very prominent person in the realm of Rwandan reconciliation. Rutayisire has served as a Commissioner on the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (and vice Chairman since 2002) and is now Pastor in the Anglican Church and Subdean of the St Etienne Cathedral in Kigali. He has run a radio reconciliation ministry, and has published works in reconciliation, such as *Faith Under Fire: Testimonies of Christian Bravery during the 1994 Genocide* (1995).

Connected to AEE's role in reconciliation is its mission as an evangelical organization.

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<sup>400</sup> See the United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (September 14, 2007). *International Religious Freedom Report – Rwanda*, at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90115.htm>, last accessed on January 11, 2011.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

Although AEE staff members and retreat leaders appeared to vary much more than the leaders of PCR in their verve for evangelism, the larger mission of AEE is clearly evangelistic. Virtually every person I met at AEE claimed to be reborn or to have “confessed to Jesus,” and at times I was asked point blank whether I was saved. AEE obviously attracted many evangelicals from all over the world, but especially the United States. In fact Rutayisire helped to translate mega-church pastor Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* (2004) into *Kinyarwanda* for the Rwandan population.<sup>402</sup> Less obvious are AEE’s connections to the issue of homosexuality in the American Episcopalian Church (as discussed in Chapter Two). Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini, now the leader of tens of thousands of conservative Christians in the United States, was an early co-founder of AEE (Millard, 2009) and several people at AEE said he still serves on the AEE Board of Directors, alongside Rutayisire and Rucyahana (most commonly known by the title of his 2007 book, *The Bishop of Rwanda*).<sup>403</sup>

Almost inseparable from the issue of national and international evangelism in Rwanda today is the tight linkage of the Rwandan Anglican Church with the RPF-dominated government (Cantrell, 2007; 2009). Anglican Archbishop Kolini and Bishop Rucyahana are closely allied with the government, and if Cantrell’s (2009) argument holds true, the RPF would have had some influence in the appointment of Rutayisire as Pastor and Subdean in the Anglican Church.<sup>404</sup> The degree to which AEE as an organization is implicated in government power is unclear from the data of this study, but with two of its former leaders serving in the higher echelons of Anglican leadership, which is also linked strongly to the RPF, some implication seems likely. That AEE is a trusted partner of the government is apparent in all the trainings it runs for *gacaca*

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<sup>402</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2009). I was unable to verify if Rutayisire actually translated the book or if he had contributed to its translation.

<sup>403</sup> It was very difficult for me to verify who was actually on the board, as the Annual Reports do not state it and repeated queries were not answered. As described in Chapter Two, Kolini and Rucyahana are both prominent leaders in the Rwandan Anglican Church which has strong links to the RPF-dominated government and to conservative American evangelicals who have left the Episcopalian Church over the issues of homosexuality and same-sex marriage (Cantrell, 2007; 2009).

<sup>404</sup> Indeed, one AEE staff member expressed apparently grave concern about Rutayisire’s movement closer towards the Anglican Church, because of its obvious links with the RPF.

judges, *ingando* participants and unconfessed prisoners; in its development of a history curriculum for Bible-based elementary schools; and in its stated position that the *gacaca* is biblically supported.<sup>405</sup>

However, AEE also defies political expectations in subtle but critical ways. Firstly, Rutayisire was described several times to me as a person who “speaks truth to power,” and indeed Rutayisire himself reflected on how he refused to be intimidated by President Kagame or other senior leadership.<sup>406</sup> He openly acknowledged problems with the heavy-handedness of the government in certain areas. At the same time, he expressed in his own imperturbable way a lack of belief that more openness would work when “so many of the men who are so bent on genocide are from my own generation, and they are very resistant to changing ideas.”<sup>407</sup> Secondly, when key political events occurred during my stay at AEE, the reactions of some AEE staff and visitors to those events seemed to indicate quite a bit of complexity in their view on Rwandan politics.<sup>408</sup> Thirdly, as mentioned previously, the recognition of Hutu suffering at AEE retreats is remarkable. Although there seemed to be limits on the acknowledgement of RPF (Tutsi) crimes, the “standing in the gap” practice is predicated on the belief that all parties are responsible for causing suffering. Hutu at retreats are also very sensitive to the political context, and *any* recognition of their suffering can be taken as a very important gesture.

#### *Case Summary (AEE)*

The preceding sections have described field access and applications of methods, as well as AEE’s origins and leadership; mission, vision, values and goals; Rwanda-wide program

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<sup>405</sup> Data from interviews with Antoine Rutayisire on July 27, 2007; and Marie, reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007. A history curriculum is particularly contentious, as many authors state that Rwanda has no history curriculum. However, such is not actually the case, as Zorbas (2007) notes. There is a very basic curriculum for the schools, and of course the *ingando* camps have their own curriculum. I was unable to get a copy of either curriculum during my fieldwork.

<sup>406</sup> Data from interview of Antoine Rutayisire on July 27, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda. Confirmed in data from fieldnotes (2007-2009).

<sup>407</sup> Data from interview of Antoine Rutayisire on July 27, 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>408</sup> Perhaps I was able to see more of that complexity because a number of AEE staff members became close friends of mine. I refrain from providing examples here to avoid misinterpretations or undue attention.

approach and activities; reconciliation ministry; findings derived from data analysis; and political considerations. In summary, AEE-Rwanda is one of ten African national offices of a Christian evangelical organization (African Enterprise) founded in South Africa in the 1960s. AEE Rwanda is the exception for this study in that it was founded before the genocide and already had a reconciliation ministry in place before 1994. AEE Rwanda supports a very large diversity of programming throughout the country, including socioeconomic empowerment programs; support for orphans; assistance for HIV/AIDS sufferers; self-help groups; training for child-headed households; leadership development; and many more. The core of AEE's reconciliation ministry, and the reason for its inclusion in this study, is the healing and reconciliation retreat developed by Lloyd and her Rwandan colleagues in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 genocide.

AEE healing and reconciliation retreats are three days in length and generally serve between ten and twenty people at once. As AEE retreats serve a very wide variety of populations, the composition of groups; their reasons for being together; and the setting of the retreat differ quite a bit. At times participants know each other well, and at others they do not.

The guiding metaphor for the three-day retreat progression is a house -- with a foundation, walls, beams/ceiling, and a roof. The foundation of the house is associated with "understanding God's heart" (Day One). The walls of the house are associated with the "healing of wounds" (Day Two). The ceiling of the house relates to "repentance and forgiveness," and the roof of the house relates to "reconciliation" (all on Day Three). Key Biblical passages and psychological inputs together create a progression of teachings and activities that support the construction of the "house" that is reconciliation and forgiveness. The most impactful activities at an AEE retreat are the "Cross workshop," where wounds are shared with others and then taken to the Cross for Jesus to carry them; and the "standing in the gap" exercise, where representatives from both sides of division repent for the wrongs committed against the other. Generally speaking, AEE methodology is relatively non-hierarchical and focused on individual transformation; however, data from this study indicated that there is some variation in the quality



of delivery of AEE retreats.

Analysis of AEE data led to the development of a number of participant-identified outcomes of retreats, which correspond to the themes of restored self-esteem; “feeling human again”; compassion for self and others; role of repentance in forgiveness; unity; greater mission in life; and working together for reconciliation. The fuller range of participant-identified outcomes were only identified for some participants after multiple retreats. For many participants, an AEE retreat is the first place they have ever told their story, much less in such depth to members of a group of people they may have felt deeply distrustful of before the retreat.<sup>409</sup> Therefore, multiple types of data generally indicated very powerful experiences for both participants and observers of AEE retreats.

Politically, AEE is one of a growing number of Christian evangelical organizations promoting reconciliation in Rwanda today. Especially due to its early history before the genocide, it is favorably viewed by the RPF-led government, and in fact appears to be linked to both the RPF and to the Anglican Church at the most senior levels. Attendant with such linkages is a very strong relationship with conservative Christians abroad, especially from the United States. AEE thus appears to be somewhat implicated in the government, but also demonstrates more complexity in its approach to Rwandan history and ethnicity than might otherwise be expected. In particular, AEE explicitly recognizes a greater degree of Hutu suffering than any other organization researched for this study.

#### Case Report: Duhozanye

“The Duhozanye Association was founded in November of 1994 by a group of [genocide] widows in the district of Gisagara, located in the ex-prefecture of Butare. Duhozanye, meaning ‘to console one another,’ has now expanded its activities to cover the southern Province of the country.”<sup>410</sup> Originally comprising 330 widows as members,

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<sup>409</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2007-2008) and interviews (2007-2008).

<sup>410</sup> The specific founding date is November 11, 1994. Quotation is from Duhozanye’s website at: <http://www.duhozanye.org/webfiles/duhozanye/index.cfm>, last accessed on March 15, 2011.

Duhozanye grew rapidly to a membership of over 3500.<sup>411</sup> Services provided by Duhozanye are emotional support (particularly for those widows infected with HIV/AIDS) and a multitude of socio-economic supports for its members, all of whom are widows or orphans of the 1994 genocide. Duhozanye is included in this study because it is viewed by many parties internal and external to Rwanda as a strong example of post-genocide recovery and reconciliation.<sup>412</sup> This case report first describes field access and application of methods at Duhozanye. It then discusses in order Duhozanye's origins and leadership; mission, vision, values and goals; programmatic approach; key program activities; findings from data analysis; and political considerations. The case report ends with a short summary statement about Duhozanye.

#### *Field Access and Application of Methods (Duhozanye)*

I first heard of Duhozanye from a Rwandan friend in the United States, who recommended it to me as a “multi-ethnic” organization working for women’s empowerment and promoting reconciliation in Rwanda.<sup>413</sup> As empowerment (particularly for women) and its role in reconciliation was one of this study’s core constructs, I was eager to visit Duhozanye as soon as possible. Arriving in Rwanda in August of 2008, I made a series of calls to the coordinator of Duhozanye, Patrice (who spoke English passably well) and eventually arranged a meeting with Daphrose Mukarutamu (one of the two founders of Duhozanye) and her closest colleague Clara.<sup>414</sup> I first visited the headquarters of Duhozanye in Save (pronounced “sav-ey”) on

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<sup>411</sup> Data from multiple sources (including interviews with founder, documentary data, and articles and videos about Duhozanye) cite numbers from 3500 to over 4000 members.

<sup>412</sup> Data from contextual interviews in Rwanda and from multiple text and video sources, including: Ryan and Balocating (2010); Canadian Catholic Organizations for Development and Peace, (1998); Kaley (2004); Umubyeyi (n.d.); Integritet Film (2011); and Rombouts (2004).

<sup>413</sup> This friend had been involved with the Empowerment Institute in the US, and we met through a mutual friend. I met her in New York City on a couple of occasions, and when she heard I was leaving for Rwanda soon, she recommended I use Duhozanye as one of my research sites.

<sup>414</sup> As with the preceding case reports, all names below the founders of Duhozanye are changed in order to protect their privacy. With all four program founders, it was impossible to obscure their identity, given their mention in other printed and online sources. In this case, Daphrose’s name has not been changed, but Patrice and Clara are pseudonyms. Again, in no case did the leaders of an organization request confidentiality but it was deemed necessary for the protection of interviewees and researcher alike.

September 17, 2008, where I was given a tour of the entire facility and met for several hours with Daphrose, Clara, and Patrice.

It was clear from this first meeting that my Rwandan friend in the US was beloved by the leaders of Duhozanye, and that simply by being there to see them, I was already an “honorary member.”<sup>415</sup> Duhozanye was typical for this study, in that all four of the organizations I researched in depth were begun with a strong connection (the Rouners at PCR, the brother of my friend at AEE, and BPeace friends with Gahaya Links). However, I felt especially welcomed at Duhozanye, and was very sensitive about the population of members it served – without exception widows and/or rape victims of the genocide and young adults orphaned by the genocide. In those unrushed initial hours at Duhozanye, I shared openly about my experiences in the region, and the early childhood experiences that had led to my lifelong preoccupation with both the horrible things people do to one another, and human resilience in the face of that horror. We had a lengthy back and forth conversation about making sense of the genocide, and agreed that some things were simply incomprehensible on some level. At many times in this early conversation, Patrice (as a young man) did not translate fully enough, and Clara (who spoke French well enough for our needs) would intervene to make sure I understood both herself and Daphrose well.<sup>416</sup>

After we spoke for several hours about the founding of Duhozanye and its ongoing needs for support, we went into Butare for lunch, continuing our conversation along the way.<sup>417</sup> During this lunch, we also discussed the reality of diminishing support for Duhozanye’s work, and whether a website could be developed to help generate more support.<sup>418</sup> Daphrose and Clara in particular were fascinated to discover that Duhozanye already had a presence online, through

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<sup>415</sup> Daphrose declared me an honorary member within minutes of meeting me (data from fieldnotes, September 17, 2008)

<sup>416</sup> This entire conversation was recorded and later transcribed.

<sup>417</sup> Butare is a town of considerable size for Rwanda, and the seat of the National University of Rwanda, the National Museum of Rwanda, and a variety of hotels and businesses. It is about 20 minutes’ drive from Save.

<sup>418</sup> Clara noted that they had not had any funders of significance since 2003 (data from fieldnotes, September 17, 2008).

such sites as Rwanda Knits and a short article written by a previous visitor to Duhozanye (Kennedy, 2004).<sup>419</sup> Knowing at least two women in the US who were actively involved in website creation, I said I would see if I could find someone to do the project for free.<sup>420</sup> Indeed, over the ensuing months with Duhozanye, I assisted in gaining video footage and photographs for the website, but ran into limitations in the area of content management skills and translation of materials. As all of the video footage was in *Kinyarwanda*, and my study protocol had not outlined the usage of video materials, none of it was used as data in this study.

My first visit to Duhozanye was very productive in terms of making clear the aims of my research, developing good rapport with organization leaders, and making arrangements for interviews and meetings that I might be able to observe. Because Duhozanye is comprised of 30+ “sectors,” i.e. locations where multiple groups of members meet, and these sectors are located across a vast region, we agreed that my research would be best served by concentrating my efforts on nearby sectors. We agreed that I could attend the General Assembly meeting at the end of the month and several “MUSO” meetings (short for *mutuelle de solidarite*) in the following week.

When I returned that next week, I had hired a translator to join me; a young Tutsi female by the pseudonym of Monique. We were very warmly greeted by 20 or 30 women gathered around on the grass behind the headquarters. We observed as they began two separate small group meetings, in which 10-15 women from one area shared their weekly problems and contributed to the collective *caisses* (described below). We listened and observed both of these

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<sup>419</sup> See Rwanda Knits website. <http://www.rwandaknits.org/>, last accessed on March 15, 2011. In reality, most of the widows at Duhozanye do not seem to grasp what the use of a website is, as few of them ever access a computer or know how the internet is used. Even Daphrose and Clara seemed to grasp the concept in the abstract sense, knowing it might help them because young people were using the internet, but not really knowing how to project an image of their organization on the website (data from fieldnotes on September 17, 2008, and October 1, 2008).

<sup>420</sup> As was mentioned in Chapter Four, I did not attempt to create an artificial research distance between myself and the “subjects” of this study. I was requesting of them considerable time and energy for my study, and felt it would have been arrogant and insensitive to fail to respond emotionally or materially to the depth of the need before me. I not only tried to help them establish a website, but I gathered school supplies for orphans under their care. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to suspect that in seeking my help for their own needs, Duhozanye leaders may have been more preoccupied with making sure I was finding what I needed than otherwise would have been the case. Therefore distortions of the data are possible.

meetings taking place, and gained a sense of the problems the widows face in their daily lives and how they support each other. Later, all the women came together for one large meeting, so that I could introduce myself and explain why I was visiting Duhozanye. Again, we were very warmly welcomed and thanked for having taken the time to “come and say hello to us.” Individual women spoke up to ask me questions, such as were there widows in the US and if so how are they surviving. There was quite a bit of laughter and side chatter after each of my answers. At this point, Clara got up to ask who would like to talk to me about her experiences, and almost every hand rose. Then one woman observed that some people have the same kinds of experience, and a discussion ensued about how I could talk to women who had different kinds of stories. It was clear from this discussion that the widows were identifying who had different types of stories to tell, but eventually they decided the most important thing was that I talk to some women who had joined Duhozanye right after the genocide and some who had not joined Duhozanye until much later. This seemed sensible enough to me, so eight women were chosen to meet with me over two visits in the following weeks. By early October, those interviews were completed, and four more women from further away were invited for interviews by Daphrose and Clara.<sup>421</sup>

In this manner, each visit to Duhozanye was planned with the information I had gained at the previous visit; this strategy worked well for me, in that over five months’ time, I was able to observe a General Assembly meeting, five separate small group meetings (“MUSO”), and the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration (all of which occurred at Duhozanye’s headquarters). I visited Daphrose in her home several times, and she and her adopted son gave me a tour of the National Museum of Rwanda when my mother was on a short visit to Rwanda. We also visited a number of Duhozanye’s nearby project sites, including income-generating activities; projects to sustain

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<sup>421</sup> Significantly, although Duhozanye openly includes Hutu widows of Tutsi men who were killed in the genocide, and despite my request to interview one of these women, I only interviewed Tutsi women at Duhozanye. As Clara told me in our first meeting, Hutu women are also traumatized, having watched their families do nothing to protect, or actively pursue and kill their husbands. Victims’ organizations in Rwanda are critiqued (and sometimes called “extremist”) for including only the Tutsi “widows of the genocide” to the exclusion of Hutu women who also lost their husbands to the RPF (Rombouts, 2004). Duhozanye is slightly more inclusive by including Hutu widows.

orphans; and beneficiaries' homes.<sup>422</sup> Furthermore, because the study had originally been designed with a "phase two" to include four life histories of women leaders in Rwanda, I conducted two life history interviews with Daphrose.<sup>423</sup> As Daphrose was very interested in my research going well, we had many occasions to talk about what I had heard from the women and what it indicated to me about their experiences of reconciliation and recovery. These might be called "member checks," but they were somewhat loose because I wasn't sure for quite some time that I would include Duhozanye in the final set of cases, nor did I know how I would analyze the data.<sup>424</sup>

Overall, interviews at Duhozanye were considerably longer on average than at the other three organizations analyzed in this study. Where at PCR and AEE many of my interviews occurred spontaneously at retreats, and at Gahaya I interviewed women for short breaks from their work (or during their weaving), at Duhozanye the interviews were unrushed and typically uninterrupted. Although there was a lot of background noise (the sawmill in particular), it was generally quiet and peaceful, and the women were in no hurry to leave. As it was still early in my fieldwork phase, I too felt unrushed, and generally let the interviews unfold in a very free-form manner. This led to an abundance of interview data.

After the data collection phase was concluded, I still visited Duhozanye once more to thank them for their time, give them some materials I had copied for them, and to bid farewell in an unrushed manner. I met Patrice twice more in Kigali, once to give him a CD and another time to give him school supplies I had collected for the orphans. Daphrose and Clara also came to Kigali in January of 2009 to bring me to the airport and pile me up with gifts for my Rwandan

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<sup>422</sup> Sites visited included: a bean storage facility; the carpentry shop for male orphans; the knitting workshop for female orphans; a barn for pigs being raised for distribution to beneficiaries; a field for production of beans for distribution; the house of a member who had been given two cows; two mills for grinding grain; a beekeeping project; a mushroom project; and the genocide memorial that Duhozanye had played a critical part in having built.

<sup>423</sup> Daphrose was the only one of four life histories that was found within one of the four organizations. Daphrose's life history data is included because 1) it provides further insight on the origins of the organization and 2) she is a survivor of the genocide and a widow and is therefore capable of reflecting on the organization's importance in helping her recover and reconcile.

<sup>424</sup> In fact, the final decision to include Duhozanye in this body of work came in late 2010.

friend in the US. As neither Daphrose nor Clara are familiar with the usage of a computer, communication with Duhozanye since field research has been limited to occasional emails with Patrice (the young coordinator), letters sent by mail, and a visit my husband made to Duhozanye in 2010.

My translation at Duhozanye was by far the most consistent among the four organizations in this study. Apart from that very first meeting (where Patrice was a somewhat reluctant translator) and until my very last meeting with Daphrose, my translator was Monique, a returnee from Burundi soon to start at the National University in Butare. She had been recommended to me by a Rwandan colleague quite early in the study, and indeed her English and French were quite good. However, her enthusiasm and therefore quality of translation waned as the study progressed. I sometimes had to remind her to translate directly or to let me hear the woman's answer, not the answer she expected the woman to give. Worried that I was not getting adequate translation, I had one of my key informants listen to some of the later recordings to make sure I had not missed critical information.<sup>425</sup>

Furthermore, while Monique was instantly and affectionately welcomed by the women of Duhozanye, and generally showed an appropriate and compassionate presence for their difficult stories, it became clear at the very end of my time with Duhozanye that her relative youth was a shortcoming when talking to women who had been raped. Throughout my time at Duhozanye, I had been surprised that there had been no mention of direct experience of rape in an organization where so many had apparently survived the genocide only by being continually raped. In contrast, at another organization I had been visiting (*Mbwira Ndumva*), I heard several stories of rape delivered in an almost casual manner. It was only in the very last meeting with Daphrose, when Monique quite unprofessionally decided she needed to go to a meeting in Butare, that I realized the impact of her youth and status as an unmarried woman. I told her that of course I could not keep her from going to her meeting, but I insisted she go find Clara to translate for me,

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<sup>425</sup> He determined that she was accurate but sometimes incomplete in her translation, which I knew from having heard short paragraphs of translated material after longer conversations.

as Daphrose speaks only *Kinyarwanda*. When Clara returned, and Monique left, the conversation took on a completely different quality. It was now just three mature women speaking, and we spoke of husbands, the loss of children, and – quietly – rape.<sup>426</sup> It was a powerful moment for me to realize that I had been considering myself the “outsider” when in fact I was an insider. Unfortunately, it is hard for me to know in what other ways having a young female translator affected my data. However, I suspect that the women would have conveyed a more positive view on reconciliation and recovery in her presence, in keeping with a society-wide effort to move forward from a dark past -- if nothing else for the interest of the young.<sup>427</sup>

Internal documentary data for Duhozanye was relatively easy to obtain, although perhaps not revealing in terms of this study’s objectives. I was welcomed to view any number of Duhozanye reports, where differing levels of strategic planning and organizational self-assessment were reflected. Some materials had not been translated from *Kinyarwanda*, but a sufficient number were available in French, including a listing of all Duhozanye partners and awards over the years. Of particular importance was a booklet published in 2003 entitled, *Les Temoignages des Veuves de Save Regroupees dans l’Association Duhozanye*.<sup>428</sup> Daphrose also let me copy a Duhozanye video showing the ceremonies dedicating cows to widows. Due to internal and external recognition of Duhozanye’s efforts, there are also several videos of varying quality and accessibility, including: *Mother Courage* (Witness, 2007), *From Tears to Hope* (CCODP, 1998), and *Duhozanye – We Who Comfort Each Other* (Integritet, 2011). There are also short online articles about Duhozanye, such as those by Kennedy (2004); Ryan and Balocating (2010); and Umubyeyi (Topcoat Magazine, n.d.). Finally, some details about

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<sup>426</sup> Burnet (2005) also writes of her discovery that older Rwandan women will not discuss “women’s” issues with a “girl” although for Burnet at the time she was excluded by this boundary rather than included.

<sup>427</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009).

<sup>428</sup> The title of the booklet translates to “The Testimonies of Save Widows Brought Together in the Duhozanye Association.”



Duhozanye as one of many victims’ organizations in Rwanda were found in a lengthy book by Rombouts (2004), although some of her data conflict with information Duhozanye leaders gave me. A summary of all data sources for Duhozanye is provided in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4: Sources of Data for Duhozanye**

<b>Interviews with demographic information</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Documents/Video</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Founder (6 times formal, multiple informal, plus 2 times for life history): Tutsi female &gt; 62 y.o.</li> <li>• 2 Program Officers (2 times formal, multiple informal): 1 Tutsi male, 1 Tutsi female</li> <li>• 12 members (formal): all Tutsi female survivors.</li> <li>• 1 US-based Rwandan supporter: Tutsi female.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 General Assembly Meeting</li> <li>• 5 small group meetings (“MUSO”)</li> <li>• Program sites: mill, pig barn, produce field, beverage distribution center, sawmill and carpentry shop, knitting workshop, beekeeping operation; mushroom cultivation operation; genocide memorial.</li> <li>• Founders’ household and family, multiple visits in Kigali.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochures</li> <li>• Published (2003) Testimonies</li> <li>• Internal strategic planning documents</li> <li>• 3 videos by other parties</li> <li>• 3 online articles</li> <li>• Rombouts (2004)</li> <li>• Internal video for cow ceremony</li> </ul>

**Note:** Age of all persons over 62 years of age are indicated with > 62 y.o. to distinguish persons who would have been young adults during critical events of 1959-1962.

*Origins and Leadership (Duhozanye)*

In considering the origins of Duhozanye, it is first important to recall the situation in Rwanda in mid-1994, after up to a million people (mostly Tutsi) had been killed in 100 days’ time by their neighbors, priests, leaders, and family members using (mostly) machetes, clubs and other fashioned tools. Those Hutu that remained alive had either participated in the violence or had witnessed much violence but had avoided participation in some way. The Tutsi that remained alive emerged from hiding places in houses, swamps, forests, fields, and holes dug in the ground, often to find that their children, husbands, parents, and extended family had been tortured and killed in extremely brutal ways. For many Tutsi women in particular, the only

reason they were still alive was because they had some sexual value to individual Hutu or groups of Hutu.<sup>429</sup> As a consequence, they were sexually traumatized and often had contracted HIV/AIDS in the process. Daphrose describes this period of time:

It was a catastrophic event, the genocide...The genocide was catastrophic, we came together with the other widows who were survivors of the genocide, who lost their husbands and children during the genocide. The women were very very very devastated after the genocide. They were in solitude, in profound solitude. They had lost their children, they had no reason to live anymore. They didn't have the desire to live. The genocide had carried away nearly two million [sic] persons. After that, the widows of the genocide, they were misery itself, they weren't even able to find the desire to live.

Furthermore, as mentioned previously, due to the murder or flight of so many men, post-genocide Rwanda was about 70% female, and of those about 80% were widows or single women (CCODP, 1998). Newbury and Baldwin (2000, p. 3) describe the situation faced by women in Rwanda after the genocide:

The war and the genocide shattered the dense local friendship networks and community solidarity that had traditionally provided solace and support for women. Family members and friends were killed or fled, and neighbors and former friends sometimes turned into enemies. What was left was not only social dislocation, but also the legacy of fear, insecurity, anger, and for some, a desire for revenge. Under these conditions, social trust dissolved, and many women came to feel isolated, alone, and abandoned.

It is in this crucial moment that two women named Daphrose Mukarutamu and Speciose Mukandutiye decided to call together all the widows throughout the district of Save to see if they could do something together to overcome their problems. Daphrose was well-known previously for being active in the rural workers' movement (CCODP, 1998), but as a Tutsi she also had lost almost everything. Having made her way back to Save from Kigali in the midst of the violence (and with the help of several Hutu families), she eventually found out that her husband and eight of her eleven children had been killed.<sup>430</sup> Nevertheless, as she said, "The widows were all over

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<sup>429</sup> Rapes by Tutsi men (particularly the RPF in the aftermath of the genocide) have also been reported (Twagiramariya & Turshen, 1998), and indeed one woman in this study reported the "victory" of the RPF as the most traumatic time of the genocide after they accused her of being an accomplice (*ibiyitso*) to the Hutu and raped her.

<sup>430</sup> In one of the more heartbreaking moments of my time with Daphrose, she rather calmly showed me pictures of

the place, and there is not a thing they had not lost. Some were even thinking to kill themselves. I wanted to help them even though I too was suffering so much.”<sup>431</sup> Similarly, Speciose had been pursued by *genocidaires* who tried to trick her into revealing the whereabouts of her children. She survived, as did her children, but her husband was killed (CCODP, 1998). The strength shown by these two women, and Daphrose in particular, was often commented upon by Duhozanye members, and when I asked Daphrose where she had found it she said:

I don't know where it comes from, it is just natural. People ask me how I did it and I can't tell them. I do not know myself very well. I just do something and people say, oh, how did you do that, but I can't say. I am not even intellectual and I only have primary school education and some studies I had to do after that. I learned it from nowhere, nobody could tell me how to do it, I think it is just natural, because after the war I felt pity for those who had survived. Everyone was crying and I felt pity and inside of me I wanted to bring those people together to share ideas. When a problem would come to my attention, I would go home and think about a solution and then I would bring it to them. That is how it happened....for me, my children were killed and I do not know how, so it is very painful. But I always think someone else's problems are more important than mine....I didn't know that after experiencing these terrible things, it was possible to still survive and live normally. I always thought I would die if I lost a kid, two kids, three kids. But I survived and I don't know how.<sup>432</sup>

However, in a later interview, while reflecting how Speciose is now a member in Parliament, Daphrose provided some insight into how early childhood experience might have shaped her ability to lead in a country where women were not typically leaders:<sup>433</sup>

Before the war, I never dreamed a woman could be in the Parliament. But even before, I used to believe in women, I knew women could do such a thing. I think it was in my nature to lead even as a woman, because when I was young I grew up with only my Mom and I used to be the only child in the home. I would go see what the boys were doing in

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her children. For one of the eight killed there were no longer any photos of any kind available. For the other seven, her own photos had been burned with her house and therefore all she were indistinct blown up photocopies of snipped bits of photographs her children had been in alongside other people previous to the genocide. She said, “I would have thought I could never live through the death of even one of my children. It was unimaginable to me. But now I have lived through it and I see it is possible, and anyway, I have adopted more children to fill my house.” (Data from interviews, Sept-Dec, 2008).

<sup>431</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Sept 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>432</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Sept 27, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>433</sup> Daphrose encouraged Speciose to finish her schooling and seek leadership positions, at first locally and then nationally. Being already in her late 70s, Daphrose said she had no interest in doing anything other than Duhozanye.

the other homes and then come home and do those things at home. Even when I grew up and got married, my husband worked and so I did everything in the house, I said why can't women do these things?<sup>434</sup>

Having been a well-known leader before the genocide, Daphrose describes how she first brought the widows of the region together for the first, then the second meeting:

Just seven months after the war, I was working and kept seeing so many orphans and widows. They were crying all the time, so I had the idea in my mind to ask the authorities to call all the widows together so that they could meet. The first meeting took place in August of 1994, and there were too many there, like 500 widows. That first meeting was only crying. But I told them to have faith, that I had brought them together to be united. Everyone told the story of how they wished to die and I told them don't wish to die, we will meet next month. At that time there were some widows who hadn't experienced some terrible things, so when they heard those terrible stories, they were afraid to come back and the numbers [for the next meeting] dwindled.<sup>435</sup> We fixed a date to meet the next month so that it would be known to the authorities and everything. The second meeting was on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, and they were still crying because some of them didn't even have a place to live. But for the second meeting they also came back with stories about how they are living. At that time they didn't even have clothes to wear, houses, nothing. But they could see they were other people who had survived and they could be strong together.<sup>436</sup>

By the third meeting, the widows were starting to narrow their attention to the most critical problem they all faced; housing.

The main problem they had was nowhere to go and no house to live in. Most of their houses had been destroyed. At that time, you could find something to eat, but no house to sleep. So, I decided to go to the authorities and ask for the people who had stolen things from us to return them back. In the October meeting, the authorities came and looked at us and how we were. They decided to go to the public and say that everyone that had something stolen had to return these things to us. We had strength because I had been in an association before the war, and we knew how to work together to get our things back.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Oct 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>435</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Sept 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda. Clara explained this to me when Patrice faltered: "There were women whose brothers had killed their husbands and children. They were not killed, but their families did not stick up for their [husbands and children]. These women are also profoundly wounded, and they could understand what we had been through. Other widows could not understand our experience."

<sup>436</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Sept 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>437</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Sept 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

Indeed, in the *From Tears to Hope* video, there is some fascinating footage of a group of Duhozanye widows demanding goods back from another woman in her house, an action they had to take many times in that first year of working together.<sup>438</sup> By the next meeting, in November of 1994, they had decided to choose a name for their association, so that they could be united and begin constructing their own houses with the materials they had recovered and gathered with the help of some men. Daphrose had thought the idea of building houses would scare some widows away, but nearly all of them came back (approx. 300).<sup>439</sup> The ideas for association names at this meeting, says Daphrose, were all very “disheartening names, such as ‘we’re here for nothing’ or ‘we’re supposed to die,’ ‘we don’t matter anymore,’ things like that.” She told them each time they get together they tell stories and listen to each other, so why not name it “let’s console each other.” And that became the name of their association, Duhozanye. Daphrose was elected president and small groups were formed based on where the women were living.<sup>440</sup>

The women were thus unified with the goal of building houses for themselves, but there were many obstacles for them on this path. First and foremost was the taboo against women building houses in Rwandan culture. In Rwanda, only men build homes, particularly when a young man prepares to bring his new bride back to his village of origin. The women not only lack the skills to build homes, but they faced potential ridicule for doing so. Their solution was to “sneak up onto the roof at night” (Ryan & Balocating, 2010) so that nobody could see under their skirts. Supportive men gave them pants to wear, and they increasingly built houses during the day. They worked in small groups and focused on one home at a time, finishing 60 such homes between 1994 and 1997.<sup>441</sup> At first the homes were badly built and today few of them are standing. Eventually, Duhozanye members built over 300 houses, though there are many still

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<sup>438</sup> I was unable to determine whether this footage was reenactment or live footage. Other footage in the same film showed the women at their early meetings, and it is hard to not be struck by how distraught they look. Some footage may be reenactment, but the early meetings appear to be live footage. The film was produced in 1998.

<sup>439</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Sept 27, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>440</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on Oct 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda. Later on, women from different regions came to Duhozanye, many of them relocating to the Save area to be members.

<sup>441</sup> Data from interview of Clara on Sept 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

left to be built today and waning donor funds have made meeting all the needs difficult. There are a number of other efforts Duhozanye makes on the parts of orphans and widows, which are described in the *Program Activities* section below.

Duhozanye was eventually “endowed with its legal personality” on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2003, and is currently composed of over 3500 members.<sup>442</sup> Daphrose continues to be the primary leader of Duhozanye, while Speciose has taken on a series of leadership positions is now a deputy in the Rwandan Parliament and the president of the Women Parliamentarians Association.<sup>443</sup> In the process of gaining a legal identity, Duhozanye has organized itself in the manner of any non-profit organization operating in Rwanda. The organizational structure of Duhozanye is comprised of four central organs, including: the general assembly (constituted by all founders and members), the management committee (where the legal representative and all officers reside), the supervisory board, and coordination/program. The general assembly only meets in its entirety once every three months while monthly meetings are held with one officer from each sector (the farthest sector is at about 20 miles distance).<sup>444</sup>

#### *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals (Duhozanye)*

The textual sources outlining Duhozanye’s mission, vision, values and goals include brochures and internal strategic planning documents. Most of these documents are in *Kinyarwanda*, some of them in French, and a very few in English. The information related here is translated from French documents, which varied quite a bit in their quality of syntax. Aside from awkward wording, there were no notable inaccuracies or inconsistencies across textual sources. Here, I simply present the most straightforward statements about Duhozanye from its one page fold-out brochure (of which two slightly different versions were obtained). First, “the vision of Duhozanye is to make widows into persons who are developed, well housed, well

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<sup>442</sup> Data from Duhozanye brochure (n.d.)

<sup>443</sup> Data from fieldnotes (Sept-Dec, 2008)

<sup>444</sup> Data from observations and interviews (Sept-Dec, 2008).

nourished, open to the indexes of development and striving together in equality to build a peaceful world.”<sup>445</sup> Otherwise stated, the vision of Duhozanye is to “aid the widows to empower themselves and to participate in the development of the country.” Also stated in the brochure:

Duhozanye has for its mission the socioeconomic rehabilitation of widows and orphans of the genocide, in light of their integration in daily life to better participate in the development of the country. Duhozanye would like specifically to contribute to the protection of widow’s and orphans’ rights to integrate them in sustainable development in its zone of intervention.

Duhozanye’s “zone of intervention,” also called “zone of activity,” is the ex-district of Save in the Southern Province of Rwanda, but since 1996 its activities have come to cover the entire province.<sup>446</sup>

The “Principal Objective” of Duhozanye is to “defend the rights of the widow and the orphan of the genocide, and to contribute in the development of its zone of intervention.”

“Specific Objectives” are:

1. To contribute to the building of a widow capable of taking responsibility for her situation to serve the model of sustainable development and the construction of a peaceful world.
2. To promote activities of economic integration for widows and orphans so that they are able to satisfy their primary needs.
3. To research the paths and means to take the widow out of isolation to [benefit from] sustainable development.
4. Reinforcement of the institutional capacity to reach the stage of self-financing.

#### *Programmatic Approach (Duhozanye)*

Duhozanye’s programmatic approach is certainly evident in its mission, vision, values and goals, but gained vibrance in many expressions which appear in documents and in the interviews with leaders and members of Duhozanye. In particular, the booklet of testimonies entitled, *Les Temoignages des Veuves de Save Regroupees dans l’Association Duhozanye*

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<sup>445</sup> Data from Duhozanye brochure (n.d.).

<sup>446</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on Sept 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda

(hereafter called the “booklet of testimonies”) provides rich and agonizing personal descriptions of the widows’ experiences, and describes Duhozanye’s collective *philosophie de la vie* (“philosophy of life”). There appear to be three simple and distinct messages that guide Duhozanye’s approach, which are evident in the booklet of testimonies: first, in women lies the future of Rwanda; second, we must act rather than waiting for others to help; and third, in unity we are stronger. Each of these is briefly described here.

Women’s empowerment is the primary motivator of Duhozanye’s work. This is shown in the variety of popular statements in the Duhozanye brochure attesting to the power of women, such as “Women can do it!” or “They have demystified the culture in order to have their own houses.”<sup>447</sup> As Josepha Nyirankundabera (the Secretary General of PREFED), states in the CCOOP (1998) film *From Tears to Hope*, by building houses, the widows “shattered myths” about “power relations between men and women...in Rwanda and maybe for Africa as a whole.”<sup>448</sup> Beyond the building of the houses, Duhozanye widows have pushed for change in many areas and have gained rights and responsibilities never accorded to women before (such as ownership of land and livestock). Going one step further, the belief at Duhozanye that women are the future of Rwanda is stated most succinctly on the cover of the testimony booklet: “Duhozanye: The empowerment of the woman; the hope of a nation.” It is also reflected in leaders’ statements about what they have learned, such as Clara:

That is the experience that we women have lived, that the women can construct the country, even if our culture said we can’t construct houses or have trades. We experienced through our efforts that the women are capable and they can do anything.<sup>449</sup>

Such change in gender roles may have been inevitable in a country where so many men were absent or deceased, so many women lacked the most basic of necessities, and the country

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<sup>447</sup> Data from Duhozanye brochure (n.d.).

<sup>448</sup> PREFED stands for *Programme Régional de Formation et d'Echanges pour le Développement*, or in English, Regional Program for Training and Development Exchanges.

<sup>449</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.



itself was in total disarray. Although aid agencies had flooded into Rwanda, and in fact some of Duhozanye's first 60 houses utilized metal roofs from the UN (Ryan & Balocating, 2010), in reality there was far too little outside assistance for the women to become dependent upon. As Josepha Nyirankundabera recounts, "They said we have no place to live. I said PREFED can't help you, we don't have budgets for building homes. Try to figure it out for yourselves, don't wait for someone from the outside to come" (CCODP, 1998).

Furthermore, laws and traditional beliefs designating the ownership of property and guardianship for children to men only were serious problems for women and orphans trying to meet their basic needs. So, as described in the *Origins* section above, the women had to take matters into their own hands, first going to authorities and demanding their family properties back, and later pushing for women's ownership of land and guardianship of their children (Kennedy, 2004). And in the years since the genocide, the authorities have overall been quite supportive of women's empowerment, as Patrice describes:

After the genocide, there were many women left. Even the orphans, the girls, were more than the boys. After that, they realized that the men had contributed very much in the genocide. So, the new government after the genocide trusted the women much more because they were so many and they were very determined. So they let them lead. Because even in those meetings when the government called the population and everything, the women were very numerous and they were very very determined to take action and the government said OK, maybe they are able to lead.<sup>450</sup>

Despite a climate conducive to women's empowerment more generally in Rwanda, Duhozanye stands out among victims' organizations because it serves an entirely rural and mostly uneducated population of victims that has been able to make real gains in local leadership.<sup>451</sup>

Drawing on her own associational experience previous to the genocide, Daphrose has implored the widows to be participants in decisions that impact their own lives:

I always told them if you have problems when you are not in the solving committee,

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<sup>450</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>451</sup> However, the confidence for and experience with leadership appeared to differ between the founder(s) and many of the members of Duhozanye, which is discussed in the *Findings* section below.

every solution doesn't please you. So, you have to be in there and that is how we started being local leaders. I kept telling them in order to solve our problems we should go in those committees and solve our problems. So for example if someone comes to say that she has been robbed, we can support her and speak for her at that meeting if we are local leaders. But some of the women said, 'We can't be authorities, we can't lead our own people. And even if we can be leaders, we can't help them. For me I feel like if I am a leader, I will want to kill them all.' But I said no, for the sake of our own population, you should go and be authorities. I'm not asking all of you to be authorities but we should elect some of our members so that they can go and be authorities. They resisted but eventually they agreed.<sup>452</sup>

Perhaps most poignantly, beyond seeing themselves as decision-makers, the current leadership of Duhozanye (i.e., Daphrose and Clara) stressed their identity as broader than that defined by their traumatic experience, as expressed by Clara in the following reflection:

Some of the killers are still in prison and others have fulfilled their sentences and have been released for community work. We decided to rejoin the programs of development, of regional work, of reconciliation, of construction of the country, because we had to work with those others, and live with them. We decided we had to work in those affairs together. We wanted to participate in current life, in basic activities, be leaders in the community. We are really changing our roles in Rwandan society, like our member who was just like us and is now a Deputy [Parliamentarian]. You see, really the women work everywhere, wherever there are projects or activities to develop the country. We are not only widows; we have something to say about daily affairs.

Finally, the third message in Duhozanye's approach is that in unity there is strength. This is reflected of course in the name Duhozanye, "let's console each other." The need for women to come together with other women was Duhozanye's entire *raison d'être*. Soon enough, the widows realized that crying and listening was not enough, and that they had to take action. Sensitive to their vulnerability as widows in Rwandan society, they knew that in coming together they'd be more likely to succeed. As Clara describes:

Everything is violence here, when a woman is chased away from her husband's property or children are taken away, that is violence and there is so much violence against women. A widow is alone and vulnerable. She is always an easy target and people take advantage of her or abuse her. Her only recourse as a widow is to come together with others.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on September 27, 2008, in Save, Rwanda. By 1998 three Duhozanye members had been elected as counselors (local leaders) in local elections.

<sup>453</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

By coming together, the widows of Duhozanye cared for each other the way their families and husbands would have cared for them before, as Daphrose states:

We were not deterred, we kept building houses. That was the way we constructed the houses, and the women said instead of having a place where people will take care of us, we will put ourselves together so we can support each other. We'll move together.<sup>454</sup>

Indeed, the women of Duhozanye have literally “moved together” by bringing many members closer to Save so that they can be free of harassment and work together. This is described in the next section.

### *Program Activities (Duhozanye)*

Duhozanye is involved in a wide variety of projects and activities that differ across sectors or across periods of time in the association's history. Therefore, only a brief description of activities will be provided here, beginning first with the “recruitment” of members, and then proceeding through five program areas that serve as a reasonably good framework for the variety of program activity at Duhozanye.

### *Recruitment of Duhozanye Members*

On the face of it, it should seem pretty simple who the members of Duhozanye are: widows and orphans of the genocide. Therefore, they are not men (although men may be and are employed by Duhozanye), and they are not women whose husbands are still alive. But as was indicated by the decrease in attendance from the first to the second meeting (shown above) not all widows in Rwanda are considered “widows of the genocide.” Those who were not in the country for the genocide, or those whose husbands were killed outside the country or in acts not considered genocide (such as RPF killings of Hutu) are not members of Duhozanye. However, Hutu women who had Tutsi husbands killed in the genocide can be members of Duhozanye because, “They have suffered as we have suffered.”<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> It was a bit unclear whether a widow who remarries (and everyone at Duhozanye said this was rare) can remain a member, as Clara said they can't but another widow insisted they can, even if they move to another sector. Most

Formally, a widow of the genocide becomes a member of the association by sending a request letter to the President of the Association (Daphrose) and her membership has to be agreed to by the General Assembly.<sup>456</sup> In practice, however, the process has been much more personal and prolonged, especially in the early years. “Recruitment” in the early years was largely a matter of “going out to the hills to find the ones that were all alone, to bring them together.”<sup>457</sup> In some cases, friends or family of a widow who was alone and isolated came to see Daphrose, and in other cases, Daphrose went looking for widows she knew were being harassed. Several interviewees told me stories of widows who were being harassed and who had moved to Save to escape harassment. They said the least safe were the widows living in the communities they lived in before the genocide, and the most safe had either moved closer to Duhozanye, or had moved to an *umudugudu* (villages constructed after the genocide).<sup>458</sup>

### *Program Activities*

Beyond Duhozanye’s humble beginnings as the builder of houses for widows, it has expanded its activities into many areas of development work. The five program areas outlined in the Duhozanye brochure are:

1. Agriculture and animal husbandry
2. Education and development of genocide orphans
3. Trainings for beneficiaries
4. Legal support and advocacy
5. Revenue generating activities

While these five areas of activity are not comprehensive, they serve as a reasonably good

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interviewees, including Daphrose and Clara, said that even young widows have rarely remarried after the genocide, and instead refer to Duhozanye as their husband. This was confirmed in several of my interviews with widows. In the early years, there were rules for widows wishing to remarry, such as doing HIV testing and being married in a “good way,” and Duhozanye supported widows in obtaining the required items in their new house. These would traditionally include pots and pans, sheets, some clothing, and other housewares (data from multiple interviews, Sept-Dec, 2008).

<sup>456</sup> Data from Duhozanye brochure (n.d.).

<sup>457</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>458</sup> The government’s intentions in building *umudugudu* is beyond the scope of this study but reducing the vulnerability of the population is one of the objectives they are purported to serve.

framework to describe the variety of programming at Duhozanye. In addition to these five, an additional section for unity and reconciliation work is added, as well as a final section reflecting on the awards received by Duhozanye.

*Agriculture and animal husbandry.* From its beginnings, when aid programs came into post-genocide Rwanda, there was an acute need to rebuild livestock holdings, and Duhozanye started doing so immediately. Starting with goats and chickens, and then with cows, Duhozanye initiated a livestock breeding program and began distributing cows, pigs, and other animals to members. The cow breeding project in particular is notable because women never cared for cows in Rwanda previous to the genocide, yet now many widows and orphans have access to milk every day because of the cows on their properties.<sup>459</sup> Since its beginnings with 87 cows, Duhozanye's total stock has risen to over 400 (Ryan & Balocating, 2010). Similarly, the pig breeding project has dramatically improved the lifestyles of recipients, due to the rapid reproduction and weight gain of pigs.<sup>460</sup>

In addition to the livestock program, Duhozanye has trained members in improved agricultural techniques through demonstration farms. Agricultural projects include sunflower farming, beekeeping, and mushroom production. The association grows some of its own foods collectively for distribution to widows' families, and also purchases foodstuffs (most commonly beans) in seasons of abundance, storing them in granaries and reselling for profit during seasons of relative scarcity.

*Education and development of genocide orphans.* The widows of Rwanda have often taken on many orphans in the aftermath of the genocide, and the widows of Duhozanye are no exception. As Clara describes:

In this region every woman who is a widow also takes care of orphans. Little by little the

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<sup>459</sup> I visited several homes with cows, where they were penned in quite small enclosures but looked very healthy with regular fresh grasses delivered by children (data from fieldnotes, November, 2008).

<sup>460</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interview with Duhozanye's "veterinarian" on November 12, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

widows took the children in and we watch over them. There are many who do not have families, so we help them to study. They have a lot of problems also. Some of them are able to continue their studies, but there are others who cannot. They are not able because they are too traumatized to concentrate, and they have grown without paternal or maternal love. Many of them were taking care of other children from so young an age. So Duhozanye also attends to the children who were not able to continue their studies, for example we train them in weaving for girls and carpentry for boys. We also have a beauty salon. These are occupations for them.<sup>461</sup>

Aside from the carpentry shop and the knitting workshop for the orphans (located at Duhozanye headquarters in Save), other Duhozanye projects, such as the beekeeping and mushroom projects, are run by the orphans and are dispersed throughout the district.

*Trainings for beneficiaries.* Duhozanye has run a variety of trainings over the years for its beneficiaries, including workshops on leadership development, financial management, AIDS prevention and treatment; livestock disease prevention and treatment, and reconciliation. It has also provided counseling services for the widows and orphans, especially in the earlier years of its history, when it had very active partners (discussed below).

*Legal support and advocacy.* Given Duhozanye's significant role in local and even national politics, and its successes in socio-economic development, it appears to have considerable clout as an advocate for the rights of other widows and vulnerable groups. Aside from its own members who have become authorities on local and district levels, Duhozanye backs other officials, who "promote universal human rights and justice for the underprivileged" (Ryan & Balocating, 2010, p. 4). Indeed, in my time at Duhozanye, I heard three different stories of women being harassed in their community, and representatives preparing to go advocate for them with the authorities. The members apparently felt that their complaints would be taken seriously, and I heard several stories of advocacy improving the situation of a widow. In fact, I was present while Daphrose spoke to a local official about a *gacaca* judge being

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<sup>461</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

harassed, and he seemed to pay her heed. If different MUSO groups (discussed below) express similar problems in their sectors, Daphrose will call a meeting to bring them all together to work on a solution. In case of an emergency, they quite literally can call on Daphrose at any time.<sup>462</sup>

*Revenue-generating activities.* Duhozanye has multiple sources of revenue, including: members' dues, voluntary work by members, partners' financial support, revenue-generating activities, and gifts.<sup>463</sup> Daphrose "emphasize[s] that the association has a standing principle that every gain or revenue should be used to generate additional income" (Umubyeyi, n.d.), which appeared to hold true in my observations of Duhozanye programming.

The base activity of widows in each sector is the "solidarity group," otherwise known as the *mutuelle de solidarite*, and most commonly called "MUSO." These are essentially micro-credit groups run by the women (Ryan & Balocating, 2010). In the MUSO, groups of 15-30 widows come together on a monthly basis to pool their money and access small amounts of credit (Umubyeyi, n.d.). A fixed amount of money (500 FRw, or \$1) is collected each month from each member.<sup>464</sup> Each member's contribution is distributed into three types of collective savings; one for emergencies (e.g., deaths or illnesses); one for key life events (e.g., the wedding of a family member); and one for business start-up needs or for investments like sending children to school. The savings are locked away in boxes (blue, red, and green), and only the funds from the green case are paid back (within five months).<sup>465</sup>

Perhaps more important than the micro-credit aspect of these groups was their function as mutual support groups. I observed five MUSO group meetings taking place, and without exception they all began with a discussion of problems the widows were having. For example, at

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<sup>462</sup> Data from observations (Sept-Dec, 2008) and from interview with Daphrose on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>463</sup> Data from Duhozanye brochure (n.d.).

<sup>464</sup> The process of collection and distribution that I observed was transparent to an incredible degree. It seemed the entire meeting was expended in counting and double-checking. The women were a little embarrassed at their inability to perform math easily (data from fieldnotes and interviews, October, 2008).

<sup>465</sup> Due to problems of security, one MUSO I observed discussed at length their need to move the funds from their little boxes to a bank, and a photograph was taken of the entire group to give to the bank as identification.

one meeting, the President of the MUSO asked, “Is everyone secure?” One woman answered no, and detailed the harassment she is facing because she is a *gacaca* judge and people in her village are trying to intimidate her by throwing rocks on to her roof at night. She had also been threatened in her home, and said none of the neighbors were willing to protect her. The other women present discussed the situation at length and made a plan to go talk to the authorities in the woman’s defense.

The feeling of support and solidarity at the MUSO meetings was tangible, and even made me feel warm, welcome and loved as an observer. The pace of the meetings was very unrushed, as if there was no place else the women would need or want to be. The widows seemed at ease, confident, and secure, which was made more notable to us after the fact, when we saw several of them outside the Duhozanye headquarters. On those occasions, they seemed to both my translator and myself to be much more guarded and socially detached.<sup>466</sup>

Other sources of revenue at Duhozanye also include the volunteer work done by members (essentially all activity done by members at Duhozanye is voluntary), and the support of partners in Duhozanye projects. One problem faced by the association currently is the drying up of support from the large partners that had made Duhozanye’s earlier successes possible. Such larger partners are shown in Table 5.5, which was obtained from internal documents at Duhozanye.

Finally, a major source of revenue for Duhozanye’s projects are its revenue-generating activities. Most significant among these is Duhozanye’s retailership of BRALIRWA, a national beverage plant. One of the buildings at Duhozanye’s headquarters at SAVE is a depot for all kinds of bottled beverages, and the stream of bicycle taxis and vehicles into the Duhozanye compound for sales is constant. One bicycle taxi can, if well balanced, carry off 6 or 7 cases of beer and soda for sales in local communities, and on a single day at Duhozanye approximately

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<sup>466</sup> Data from fieldnotes (October, 2008).



**Table 5.5: Development Partners of Duhozanye**

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Area of Intervention</b>
IBUKA (“remember”)	Socio-economic and political support for genocide survivors
Global Fund	Campaign against HIV/SIDA
ARCT-RUHUKA	Campaign against HIV/SIDA, trauma counseling
Avocats Sans Frontieres (Lawyers without Borders)	Training and information on rights and laws and equal access to justice
Noyau de Paul (Seeds of Peace)	Promotion of community based peace actions
FARG	Education fund for student genocide survivors
PREFED Rwanda	Training and exchanges for development of “MUSO” groups
MINAGRI	Promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry
UNDP/UNIFEM	Modest financial support of development projects
Legal Aid Forum	Support for equal access to justice
District of Gisagara	Partner in execution of projects
Profemme – Twese Hamwe	Support for the advancement of women
NURC: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission	Unity and reconciliation trainings
Development and Peace	Support of special projects
SURF Rwanda (Survivors’ Fund)	Socio-economic support for widows and orphans

50 bicycles will come.<sup>467</sup> Duhozanye also owns several mills in the district, which process flours for people throughout the area. Near the close of this study, Duhozanye was in the final stages of applying for a UNDP grant for a sunflower oil processing plant.

Despite the considerable activity at Duhozanye, the association is facing shortages in funding as it appears international donor attention has lessened for Rwanda with other crises demanding immediate attention. Clara told me Duhozanye has not received a major infusion of funding since 2003.<sup>468</sup> Although Duhozanye said the government helps, governmental funds are difficult to obtain because local district politics impede their flow Duhozanye.<sup>469</sup> Some partners

<sup>467</sup> Bicycle taxis are the means of transport for most people in rural communities off the paved road. They are also a key method of transporting goods.

<sup>468</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>469</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda. I did not explore this

(e.g. Twese Hamwe) continue to support Duhozanye with trainings only, while others are reluctant to support overhead costs such as staff salaries.

*Unity and reconciliation.* Although unity and reconciliation are not mentioned in any of the association's goals or summary of its activities, Duhozanye does apply significant effort in this area. Organization leaders and members frequently mentioned reconciliation activity, and the government has clearly recognized Duhozanye's contributions in this area (as evidenced by awards, described below).

As an organization, Duhozanye with its partners has provided many trainings in reconciliation and trauma counseling, and almost every interviewee mentioned such efforts as important to their own process of reconciliation. Although this study looks at reconciliation more critically in Chapters Six and Seven, it seems clear that at the most basic level, counseling and training offered by Duhozanye have helped beneficiaries peacefully manage the presence of killers in their midst. Still, it appeared that reconciliation is an ongoing process for the widows, as indicated by their interest in having me return to teach them about forgiveness.<sup>470</sup> Clara describes how the trainings have made it possible to work with others (specifically *genocidaires*) again:

After those prisoners were released, after many formations, we reconciled. We had many trainings. This association gave trainings, and other organizations gave us trainings, like Profemmes/Twese Hame. And little by little, we were able to reconcile, because there were activities for us to do together. We decided we could live together. We found the means. Those projects are for everyone, not only the beneficiaries. So we have to work together in a lot of those activities and we even employ [*genocidaires*] in the activities of the association.<sup>471</sup>

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issue further.

<sup>470</sup> Data from several interviews (Oct-Nov, 2008), wherein interviewees asked me to come give them more training in forgiveness and reconciliation.

<sup>471</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 27, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

Duhozanye has also provided trainings on justice and rights, especially when the *gacaca* first began, to prepare the widows to participate as well as they could. At the same time, and not at all surprising for a victims' organization, Duhozanye is active in the *devoir de memoire*, the demand or duty to remember. The association helped to build and currently maintains a genocide memorial near Save, where over 3,000 genocide victims are buried. It has recorded many of the widows' testimonies in the booklet (2003), *Les Temoignages des Veuves de Save Regroupees dans l'Association Duhozanye*. And over the years that stories have emerged about the gruesome deaths of Tutsi victims (many of them through the *gacaca* hearings) the widows have gone to recover bodies, cleansing them and preparing them for proper burial (Witness, 2007).

The pragmatic need for the organization to support reconciliation for individuals is put in to practice every day, as the widows live relatively unprotected among Hutu who have been released from prison for killing, some of whom would be willing to kill again. Several interviewees told stories of having to negotiate with the anger of Hutu against them, which is described in more depth in the *Findings* section below.

*Awards received by Duhozanye.* Duhozanye has received honors for its work from various national and local government leaders and from the United Nations. Indeed Daphrose was one of 1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe in 2005, and represents the kind of "day to day" person recognized by the award.<sup>472</sup> Duhozanye is also mentioned by authors discussing issues of non-governmental work in community based economic development and/or post-conflict reconstruction (e.g., Ryan & Balocating, 2010). Included in the awards listed in Duhozanye's internal documentation are:

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<sup>472</sup> Peace Women Across the Globe is a network of 1000 women elected for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. See <http://www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/aktuell.php>, last accessed on January 11, 2011.

1. Diploma of honor of the Habitat center issued by the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat) in 1995.
2. Certificate of Merit issued by the Ministry of the type and the advancement of women in 2004, for the enormous contribution in the development of female gender.
3. Certificate of Merit issued by the National Commission of Unity and Reconciliation for the promotion of the programs of Unity and Reconciliation in 2006.
4. Certificate of Merit issued by the Ministry of the Public Service and labor in 2007, in the framework of entrepreneurship and the granting of labor.
5. Certificate of Merit issued by PROFEMME – TWESE HAMWE to Madam Mukarutamu, President of the association Duhozanye in the framework of the promotion of culture of peace in the community.

### *Findings (Duhozanye)*

As reflected in the above description of Duhozanye's programs, I formed many impressions about the experiences of Duhozanye members simply from watching the organization's activity, and from reviewing internal and external documents. Very unrushed interviews of multiple types (program interviews, individual in-depth interviews, and life history interviews with Daphrose) provided an abundance of interview data to analyze and compare to observational and documentary data.

In analyzing the interview data for Duhozanye, quite a few codes were created.<sup>473</sup> Many of them reflected experiences suffered during the genocide (such as "watching children suffer"), which I surmised might have an impact on learning and/or reconciliation. However, the *types* of traumatic experience were too numerous to analyze and eventually only the one mentioned as "most difficult to forgive" (i.e., rape of self or children) was given closer attention because of its profoundly humiliating quality. Seven codes came from expressions I heard versions of over and over again (e.g., "what can I do about it?" in reference to reconciliation). A few came from the theoretical foundations of this study (e.g. "changing ideas of self," and "impact of denial"). There was supportive evidence for the importance of some early constructs of this study (e.g., the role of advanced age, given historical events in Rwanda), but given the abundance of data, some

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<sup>473</sup> The methods of coding and comparing data sources to each other was described in Chapter Four and will not be repeated here.

intriguing questions had to be set aside.<sup>474</sup>

To bring coherence to the multitude of codes (over 30, including those for types of experience), they were sorted into four categories of themes, including: economic and social impacts; psychological impacts; ongoing vulnerabilities; and reflections on reconciliation.<sup>475</sup> Codes in each category were then merged further, to make their presentation here as succinct as possible. For some themes, only a short description is offered, while for others exemplary quotations are provided.

### *Economic and Social Impacts*<sup>476</sup>

It was very well demonstrated in the data that being a member of Duhozanye is beneficial to the economic well-being of a widow. Although widows continue to be poor in many cases, the association does all that it can to meet their needs, as shown by several interviewees that said, “You can’t go without eating with Duhozanye,” or “There is no problem without a solution at Duhozanye.” Two widows mentioned that other women see them with clothes and food and say, “The widows of Duhozanye are living still.” And there was nothing else quite as impressive (from an economic standpoint) than seeing two recipients of cows appearing very well-nourished, with plenty of milk for their children and for sale in their villages.<sup>477</sup>

The positive social impact of Duhozanye membership is also well-supported in the

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<sup>474</sup> In early stages of the development of this study, the potential significance of being at least a young adult during the period of 1959-1962 was considered. Indeed the three women of Duhozanye that met this condition did appear to view the genocide as a continuation of a pattern of violence. Two of the three emphasized the killers were just doing as they were ordered to do, and therefore should be forgiven. This seemed to indicate less transformational change, but was not analyzed in any depth.

<sup>475</sup> Similar to the other three programs of this study, interview data must be viewed as retrospective, as there was no pre-activity interview. Furthermore, unlike PCR and AEE (but similar to Gahaya Links), I did not observe any discrete event (such as a reconciliation training) to compare “before” and “after” data.

<sup>476</sup> Codes that fell into this category of themes were: “no problem without a solution,” “being a human being again,” “from dead to alive,” “Duhozanye as family/husband,” “changing social roles,” and “improvements in economic well-being.”

<sup>477</sup> Data from interviews of members in October, 2008 in Save, Rwanda; and observations (November, 2008). One cow can produce several liters of fat-rich milk a day, which is plenty for the family to drink and to sell in the village. One beneficiary of a cow that had reproduced (leaving her two) was actually quite large, an uncommon enough site in rural Rwanda.

interview data, although there is some indication of a shift in dependencies. Having lost their husbands and most of their social networks, at least eight of the women spoke of Duhozanye as being “my family” or of Daphrose as “our husband,” or “mother,” or even “grandmother.”<sup>478</sup> This was true even for the widows who were older than Daphrose. Many also spoke more collectively of Duhozanye as their family, or in one case, that “there was a fire burning, and Duhozanye is the water.”<sup>479</sup> The water refers to the life-saving consolation for loneliness, isolation, and “dying of sadness” that Duhozanye offers. Many of the women described feeling dead, or “like nothing,” not bathing or changing clothes for weeks, or “like a crazy woman” until they joined Duhozanye. Not all of them sounded very happy to be alive, such as Immaculee, who struck myself and my translator as profoundly sad and resigned to a life of suffering.<sup>480</sup> She spoke of being a talented student who had to give up school as a child to take care of her siblings (due to the early death of her father), only to be married and have children, lose them all in the genocide and to be “left alone on this side.” On the other hand is Anne, who was so deep in despair after the genocide that Daphrose traveled several times to her home to convince her to come to Save, yet today, she is “so happy to be alive.” Had she not decided to live, she would never have traveled to Denmark by plane “like an important person” to see her daughter go to school there.<sup>481</sup> Statements characteristic of Daphrose and Clara, such as “women can rebuild the country,” were less dramatic among regular members of Duhozanye.<sup>482</sup> But even so, the women told stories of building houses and demanding action from the authorities with smiles, laughter, and utterings of “eh-eh-eh!” to indicate they too thought it was amazing what they had been able to do as women.

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<sup>478</sup> Data from interviews of members in October, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>479</sup> Data from interview with member on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>480</sup> Data from interviews of members in October, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>481</sup> Data from interview of member on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>482</sup> From Ryan and Balocating (2010, p. 3): “Wise leadership nourished members’ self-confidence and their social network enabled them to combine their efforts to make a huge difference.”

### *Psychological Impacts*

Closely associated with social impacts, yet distinct from them in intangible ways was a set of codes that seemed to have psychological or spiritual significance.<sup>483</sup> These were distilled further into two themes: fearlessness (or surrender); and fierceness (or the determination to fight). The first theme entails a seeming paradox. On the one hand, the widows expressed something with undertones of surrender, as if they had nothing more to lose; nothing to hide; and even nothing to expect from their communities. But this surrender also seemed to bring them strength, a sort of fearlessness in the face of whatever might come. For example, almost every time I reviewed informed consent in the beginning of the interview, the interviewee said something like “I have nothing to hide anymore,” “The only thing I would not say is something I do not know,” “We live in full light at Duhozanye,” or “There is nothing I would not be willing to say.”<sup>484</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Four, this kind of response was somewhat typical for *all* Rwandan interviewees, who seemed to find it a bit amusing that I would suggest they could not self-monitor what to say. What made these statements different at Duhozanye was that they had a quality of declaration to it, shown in the intensity of gaze, a soft smile, or even a resigned flat look of resignation. The women seemed to be speaking of where they were in their lives, not about whether the interview could go where they did not want to go. Yet, because the widows were also so vulnerable, there was an implied undertone of surrender to events beyond their control, as will be shown further in the *Ongoing Vulnerabilities* section below.

The theme fierceness (or determination to fight) was less paradoxical than fearlessness/surrender. It was most striking in the stories of how important it was for women to have even a tiny house for themselves right after the genocide. Two women mentioned a *Kinyarwanda* word for an eating house and indeed the importance of such a house is also briefly mentioned in the film *From Tears to Hope* (CCODP, 1998). Clara describes:

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<sup>483</sup> Codes that fell into this category included: “pride,” “eating house,” “fighting to live,” “fierceness,” “fearlessness/nothing to lose,” “expecting nothing,” and “working in full light/nothing to hide.”

<sup>484</sup> Data from interviews of members in October, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

It was important to have even a small eating house in order to hide whether you were eating or not. People would be able to see if you were suffering and that was more humiliation, but if you could have a house, even if you had nothing to eat, nobody would have to know that you had nothing to eat, or what you were eating.<sup>485</sup>

At first, the “eating house” seemed to belong in a code for pride, self-respect, or the need to have human dignity. But a set of codes took on a slightly differing quality of *fierceness* when taken together with Clara’s description of finding the courage to live simply from the fact that one was meant to die.<sup>486</sup>

Someone comes to kill you but you are only injured...He came to kill you, but in killing you, you are not dead, but you are wounded. So, you do everything you can to live because you escaped death. That is true for us, we are wounded. We are wounded, physically and morally. But we are still not dead. That is where the courage to live comes from, because you are alive even though you were supposed to die...So, we had to live, that is where the courage comes from. We live wounded, but we are living all the same...It was important that the *genocidaires* not see us in a demoralized state. To find us...that those *genocidaires* not see the living widows in sadness, despair, too much grief. We worked so those men would not see us in a demoralized state. That also brought us courage to live, so that one not look sad in the eyes of those who wanted to kill us.

Indeed there is a sort of pride the leaders of Duhozanye express in having prevailed over evil, as is shown in the testimonials booklet regarding Duhozanye’s *philosophie de la vie* (“philosophy of life”):

Nine years after the Rwandan genocide which was a true ordeal for the widows and a profound wound to their being, they sing victory: of good over evil, of life over death, despite everything. After having lost everything, they have found their smile again, and they breathe health. “The sadness of the brave does not keep him from dancing in joy,” they state as the guiding principle of their li[ves]. It is a Rwandan proverb that the widows chose as a philosophy of life and that they took as if it was a title for a theatre piece on the genocide that they are proud to play themselves and to present to the public by way of exorcism and duty of memory (Duhozanye, 2003, p. 116-117)

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<sup>485</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 27, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>486</sup> In fact, the meaning of “fierce” is quite close, as the word for pride in French (the language in which Clara was speaking) is *fierté*, and the word for a proud person is *fier/fière*.



These statements of pride or fierceness were characteristic of Daphrose and Clara. Similar statements among the members I interviewed were a bit less dramatic in quality, and were originally matched with codes like “fighting to live,” or “spirit of living again.” For example, Petronia and her children were all “cut” with machetes, but only Petronia survived, with massive injuries. Her “spirit of living again” can also be seen as fierceness:

The dirty minds [genocidaires] are not so many, so when we see some people who have dirty minds we go and see the authorities. We are fighting for peace, fighting to live because this is our home and we have to live in peace with everyone. Sometimes others ask us where we have found the spirit of living again. Sometimes you might think we are not even widows because we can celebrate and dance, as you have seen. We found that spirit of living because we have to be strong. We have to survive.<sup>487</sup>

### *Ongoing Vulnerability*

Notwithstanding the above mentioned gains in Duhozanye widows’ desire and spirit for living again, their sense of finding community and family again at Duhozanye, and their socioeconomic gains, they are vulnerable in a number of ways. They live in largely rural areas, where the populace is relatively uneducated and poor (as are they). Some of them have moved away from their former domiciles, but many do not have the financial means to move, so often live in close proximity to the killers of their families. They are often harassed for being widows without protection, and for being *gacaca* witnesses and judges, and at least in some cases harassment has resulted in their murder.<sup>488</sup> Despite the association’s apparently effective efforts to defend the widows, I heard many mentions of harassment during my research period at Duhozanye. This short section describes the following themes: harassment of widows; stones on the roof; negotiating life with Hutu; and family protection.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>488</sup> Data from interviews of leaders and members, (Oct-Dec, 2008), in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>489</sup> “Harassment of widows” was a single code and while “stones on roof” could have been merged with it, the symbolism of the stones on the roof was sufficiently interesting (and its frequency across the study was great enough) that the code became the theme. “Negotiating with Hutu” brought together several very closely related codes, and overall provides contrast to the previously discussed code “fierceness.” “Family protection” is the code that collected together the variety of expressions and observations about Duhozanye providing safety and security.

*Harassment of widows.* Although I only interviewed one widow who personally spoke of being harassed, I heard numerous stories of widows being harassed and observed one MUSO meeting in which a widow *gacaca* judge was facing harassment. My translator explained to me the story being discussed:

She is saying she has no security. One of her houses was destroyed and she went to see the authorities, and they said that it must be the neighbors because the house didn't destroy itself and now she is still waiting. The president is saying that there is no problem for her because they are going to help her rebuild her house. The problem is the woman she has been attacked. She is telling her to go back to the authorities, to see them. The widow is saying there was a neighbor child who saw them come, and who was going to yell out for help, but the father said no. That means they will never help her. Now, the president is advising her to look for a house somewhere else.... This other widow is advising her not to leave the home without calling the police but the others are arguing that she might lose her life if she stays there. The widow says that she is always between authorities. This one says go see the other one and the other one says go see this one. They don't want to do anything. They don't want her, they don't need her.... The other women are explaining to me it is because of the *gacaca* she is being attacked. It is a common problem for the widows – if you testify and their family member goes to prison, it is like you have testified against the whole family and they all go to prison.

In former times, the widows explained to us, if someone attacked or stole from a widow, the neighbors would have to protect her or pay for her losses. Lacking husbands or neighbors to stick up for them, widows who can move away from their villages often do. As Immaculee said, “If you don't live in an *umudugudu*, you get attacked every day.” Rebecca also talked about being disrespected and ostracized for being a widow, and Anne spoke of having far fewer problems now that she no longer lives among those who killed her family. Still, Anne says, people steal from her fields almost every night, but “they are friends in the morning.”<sup>490</sup>

*Stones on the roof.* Strikingly, the form of harassment most often mentioned was the throwing of stones up on the roof of a widow's house. Such a specific action may well have symbolic value in addition to the physical harm done to a flimsy metal roof by thrown stones. Curious about what symbolic meaning the stones on the roof might represent, I contacted

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<sup>490</sup> Data from interviews of members in October, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

Christopher Taylor, author of *Milk, honey, and money: Changing concepts in Rwandan healing* (1992), and *Sacrifice as terror: The Rwandan genocide of 1994* (2001). He acknowledged it is a common way of warning people to change their behavior (in this case, don't testify against the *genocidaires*), but that it might be an implication of sorcery attack (*kuroga*). "Sorcery is sometimes called 'dancing at night' as sorcerers would dance on the roofs of their victims' houses."<sup>491</sup>

*Negotiating life with Hutu.* For those who are not able or willing to leave the villages they lived in before the genocide, the stories of their interactions with Hutu (especially those who killed their loved ones) were at times painfully poignant. More will be said on the matter of the widows' understanding of forgiveness below, but on a purely practical level of *living together* with Hutu, there was a kind of negotiation that the widows performed. For example, Clotilde is a woman born in 1943, and was therefore a young adult in the critical year of 1959. She tells how she returned to live among the neighbors who killed her husband:

To me, it was an order that they followed, so I didn't really hate them. I used to pray so that He could give them in their heart a new conscience and all of that, but for me it's like I have already forgiven everyone. When I came back to the neighbors who killed my husband, I was really happy to see them. It was like when you are neighbors, you have a problem you go and talk with them. And the wife used to come and give me food and I was very happy to know them again. But the husband wasn't happy about that, he used to tell the wife, 'You are so stupid, don't you know what we did to her husband, why can't you see?' And then the woman said, 'She is a very kind woman. So, that's why I cared for her, and I keep talking to her.' After a couple of months or something like half a year, the man went away because of what he had done. So he left and fled the country. So, the woman stays with her, they have a good relationship.<sup>492</sup>

Clotilde was my second individual interview at Duhozanye, and I thought perhaps her accommodation to her neighbors was a result of having lived through many incidents of Hutu "following orders" to kill Tutsi in Rwanda.<sup>493</sup> But other women also reported similar

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<sup>491</sup> Personal communication, April 15, 2011.

<sup>492</sup> Data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>493</sup> Also from Clotilde's Interview: "Because of my experience of 1959, I am not hating them because even after 1959, they used to come and discuss with us. They told us it was an order, so we had nothing to do with it, so we

accommodations to living with Hutu perpetrators, whether or not the killers of their family had apologized. For example, Perpetua tells how she encouraged the killers not to run away from her, as she had forgiven:

Before when those people saw me, they used to run away and I was wondering why, because I hadn't even insulted them or spoken to them in a bad way, so why are they running away from me. So, during the *gacaca*, I asked why are you running away from me, it is like over. What the *gacaca* has to do, it will do, it will do the punishment and all. But for me, don't run away. I have already forgiven you.<sup>494</sup>

In another variation on this theme, Daphrose describes how she encourages the widows to be good to the killers so that they will see what they did was wrong:

After a while that attitude of wanting to hurt them went off, even though once we were in positions of authority we could do it. Because they had a good example, we were teaching them how to be good leaders. The most important thing I told them is that in order to reconsider what they did to us, we should be good to them, we should show them good hearts so that they can always remember what they have done. And it will be considered.

Most striking among the stories that reflected some kind of negotiation with to live together with Hutu peacefully was Odetta's:

They [the killers] don't want what happened there to go out and to be known to everyone, so they are always assaulting us widows and saying, 'What will you do if the government changes, where are you going to live?' There are even some widows who have been killed because their neighbors kept on assaulting them. They are trying to threaten us. But for us, we always tell them, 'For the moment the government is good so please calm down and let's be neighbors. And if at that time you want to come and kill us, then come and kill us, but for the moment please calm down.'

*Family protection.* Given the ongoing vulnerability of widows in their home communities, it is easy to see how Duhozanye provides them not only a social network, a "family" to replace the families they have lost, but also familial protection. The protective

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had to kill people, that's why it was an order, so that's why I don't really blame them....It wasn't like bad people or anything like that, it was just because it was an order. And that's why even after that I'm OK with them." (data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda).

<sup>494</sup> Data from interview on October 7, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

aspect of the Duhozanye was evidenced by the MUSO collaborations to protect widows, the leaders' constant advocacy for association members, and the very tangible difference in how women appeared within association walls as opposed to outside them. For example, my translator and I were both struck by how different Rebecca appeared when she was with her MUSO on the lawn of Duhozanye headquarters versus how she appeared when we ran into her out on the main road to Butare. In the latter instance, she seemed nervous and unsettled, and didn't stop looking around her until we were joined by two other widows closer to the Duhozanye headquarters. As we saw her later on the lawn with her MUSO, and then interviewed her later that day, we were able to hear that she had been disrespected in her village that morning.<sup>495</sup>

### *Reflections on Reconciliation*

Given the enormity of what many Duhozanye widows have lost and their ongoing vulnerability, it is perhaps not surprising that it was quite easy to hear statements about reconciliation and forgiveness at Duhozanye, but considerably more difficult to get a sense of what the words "forgiveness" and "reconciliation" actually mean to the widows.<sup>496</sup> This section describes several themes that arose from the coding of interviews with widows and leaders, and most of them come directly from common expressions used by the widows. They include: they taught us to forgive; we have no choice; forgive and forget; reconciliation is working together; and resistance and difficulty in reconciliation.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Data from interview on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>496</sup> My fieldnotes and interviews include multiple comments and conversations (with my translator) about the kind of reconciliation the widows were expressing to us. Even when I directly asked for a woman to define reconciliation, she invariably reverted to relatively abstract and impersonal reflection.

<sup>497</sup> "Resistance and difficulty in reconciliation" brought together codes for "Difficulties posed by rape" and "impact of denial." "Impact of denial" had previously merged "reflections about *gacaca* hearings," "apologies made by perpetrators," and "genocide denial."

*They taught us to forgive.* Every interviewee mentioned the importance of Duhozanye trainings in helping them learn to reconcile and forgive, and it is significant that these teachings were usually given by counselors who emphasized the psychological benefits of forgiveness. For example, Immaculee said she learned that when you refuse to forgive, you are dying inside while the other person is “fine and happy you are suffering.”<sup>498</sup> Some widows also mentioned the importance of the government’s message about reconciliation (as with the *gacaca*), for example, Rebecca said, “After the *gacaca*, when that was finished and everything, they told us we had to forgive and so we did it.”<sup>499</sup> Other widows mentioned being told to forgive by the Church (specifically the Catholic Church, as most Duhozanye widows are Catholic).<sup>500</sup> For example, Immaculee stated, “If someone has the strength to come and ask for forgiveness, you have to forgive them, because the Bible, it says that if you don’t forgive him, you won’t be forgiven.”<sup>501</sup> In one interview, the teaching to forgive took on more of the meaning of an *order* to forgive, and we gently explored whether the order to forgive was any different than the order to kill. Most telling was the widow’s response that yes, the order of the authorities was important in both cases.

*We have no choice.* Not far from learning to forgive because of the teachings of leaders and authorities is the simple fact of not having any choice about the matter. For example, Clara describes being obligated by circumstances to forgive:

We work together with those killers, we have activities with them. That is reconciliation. We work with the one who killed our children, our husband. That is the environment we are in. You have to do everything to live together, to relive your life. You are obligated to live side by side with the one who killed your family. You can’t go anywhere. You are required to live with them day to day. If you leave your house, they are there. If you work in projects together, you have to be with them. We are with them in the churches,

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<sup>498</sup> Data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>499</sup> Data from interview on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>500</sup> Data from interviews with leaders and members (Sept-Dec, 2008).

<sup>501</sup> Data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

everywhere. We are obligated. That is the difficulty here in Rwanda. The man who killed your kid you eat with him, work with him, he's your friend also.<sup>502</sup>

Immaculee makes the simple statement that there is nobody else to live and work with if you don't forgive the Hutu group:

Even though the Hutu group is the one that killed the Tutsis, we can't be every time fighting with them, we just live with the person who killed...and you don't have any problem with them, you have to live with one another. Those people who don't reconcile or forgive, it is their problem because they are the ones who remain with the problem. You don't have a choice. If you remain with that attitude, who are you going to live with, who are you going to work with, so that's a problem.<sup>503</sup>

The most common expression by far for the lack of choice in reconciling was, "What have I to do about it?" For example, Perpetua states:

I just feel sad about what they did, but what have I to do about it? So I just have to live with it. God sees everything. I don't even try to understand why they did it. I just keep quiet. I have put myself into peace, I speak to everyone and try to forget all those things and when someone can help me with something I am happy and I just live with that.<sup>504</sup>

*Forgive and forget.* The simple decision to forgive and forget was also reflected in the interview data, and the importance of apology (usually through the *gacaca*) in helping the women to do so was sometimes noted. Clara reflects on the passage of time, "Those killers who apologized, we live with them as before, no problem. Their bad deeds are 14 years past -- that is a long time. You can never forget your husband and your children, but you forget the bad deed." The president of one of the MUSO groups I observed talked about the importance of forgetting:

When we meet, we always talk about this, how to forget about what happened so that we can survive. In order to live we have to help each other, we try to live with everyone, we have to forget what happened and go on living.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on September 17, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>503</sup> Data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>504</sup> Data from interview on October 7, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>505</sup> Data from interview on October 1, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

In a manner akin to forgiving and forgetting, one woman insisted the *gacaca* has “closed the story” for her:

The *gacaca* has solved the problem now, and it is a closed story for me. I have seen everybody and they are in prison. They are in prison and it is a closed story. It is very over. [In response to question about their release] Some of them are out now and they are doing their public service. In the end they will all be out, but the story is already over.<sup>506</sup>

Regarding the importance of the *gacaca* to the lives of the widows, Daphrose described a book she hopes she will write one day about reconciliation. In it, she would say that “there can be no peace in a country without justice,” and for the widows of Duhozanye “the *gacaca* has helped us very much to know what happened to our families, and to say what happened to them was wrong.”<sup>507</sup>

*Reconciliation is working together.* The importance of working together, as both an outcome of reconciliation and a reason to reconcile was also often stated. Here Daphrose describes how it “feels like unity” to work together:

For me what helps in reconciliation is that we are active in many different works we do and when the others see it is also important to them so they come and they work together with us and it feels like unity to them and to us and so that is how we reconcile. There are others outside of Duhozanye who come together and we do carpentry with them, we sell goods in the market, we do all works together. For me I lost my family members and friends, but I can work with the people who killed them. We solve problems together, we help each other, and we live together. So for me reconciliation is really really there.<sup>508</sup>

*Resistance or difficulty in reconciling.* Despite what seems to be considerable social and material pressure on Duhozanye widows to reconcile and to forgive, there were some indicators of resistance or difficulty in doing so. Some women looked away or crossed their arms when they said they had forgiven. Several others said they had forgiven but if asked whether they

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<sup>506</sup> Data from interview on October 7, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>507</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on January 7, 2009, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.



would leave children with the people they had forgiven, laughingly exclaimed, “No!” (*Oya!*). “Forgiveness and trust are very different things,” Odetta plainly stated.

Anne said point blank she didn’t forgive and would never forgive the killers of five of her nine children and her husband. In fact, she said if she could kill them, she would, but in that common refrain asked, “What have I to do about it?” There are several important facts about Anne’s story that give shape to this entire theme. First, she doesn’t know how four of her five dead children died. Having learned that one of her daughters jumped into a pit of dead people to avoid being raped like all her friends before her, Dorothea does not want to hear about her other sons and daughters’ deaths, suspecting they too were brutally tortured and raped. She attended the *gacaca* where the killer of her son-in-law was being heard, and decided she could not stand to attend the *gacaca* again. But it pains her greatly that she has “not even one bone to bury” and she does not even know where her loved ones’ bodies are.<sup>509</sup> Furthermore, while some of the killers of her family members have been imprisoned, one is missing and is suspected of conducting reprisal killings against Tutsi survivors. So, she has no real closure on the deaths of her loved ones and she wonders if she will be killed also.<sup>510</sup>

The ongoing harassment and anger of some Hutu would seem to pose some difficulty to widows trying to reconcile. Some perpetrators deny what they did or try to make the widows fearful of more killing, as Daphrose describes:

There are still some Hutu who are angry at the Tutsi and blame [us] for what happened, yes. What is really surprising is that the people who did a lot of killing are the ones who feel angry, because they don’t want to accept the punishment and they are always denying what they did. So, they are the ones who are always angry. They complain about what happened in the Congo, but we are not involved in that. For the killers’ part, they always talk about this in secret. We just leave it. For us, that is only their dirty minds, and that is why we are not involved with that. They try to threaten us. If you have to testify in the *gacaca*, they say what if those people come back and find out you

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<sup>509</sup> Data from interview on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda. The importance of closure, and especially “bones to bury” is of great interest to this researcher, but beyond the scope of this particular study.

<sup>510</sup> However, she did not seem to be very fearful of being killed next. She mentioned it very casually and in fact she is quoted once in the fearlessness section.

have testified against them, they are going to kill you, that is to keep you from testifying.<sup>511</sup>

As mentioned previously, the widows displayed a kind of fearlessness (or surrender) in the threats against their own lives, but they appeared to be troubled by outright or thinly veiled denials and insincere apologies. Outright denials of the genocide or the severity of it are “very hurtful,” said Daphrose as she was sitting on top of the Save Genocide Memorial.<sup>512</sup> With all the strength and fierceness I saw on their faces and heard in their voices, the fact that some Hutu would *deny* their losses or somehow justify them seemed to be very hurtful and troublesome to the widows.

Particularly in the case of rape, denials are very common. Daphrose explained that the rapists often say it didn’t happen at all, or that someone else did it, or (she said with amazement) someone else did it first! She, Clara, and I quietly discussed the difficulty in forgiving rape on our last day, when Clara said:

It is the wound that does not heal like the others, it is very difficult to forgive because they have treated you like an animal or worse. For the young woman, she may never have children. This is a curse in Rwandan culture. For the older women, sexual violation means she is no longer respected in our culture. So when the rapists deny it, the wound refuses to heal.<sup>513</sup>

Seeing one’s one children raped was also extremely difficult, as with Francoise, who saw her daughters raped and said, “I can’t say anything about forgiveness....They took every one from me, and left me here alone. Before they killed my daughters, they violated them. I see that the others have forgiven, but for me, I have not found the strength.”<sup>514</sup>

### *Political Considerations (Duhozanye)*

As shown in the foregoing discussion, Duhozanye is politically influential on the local

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<sup>511</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on September 27, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>512</sup> Data from fieldnotes (Nov 12-13, 2008).

<sup>513</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose and Clara on January 7, 2009, in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>514</sup> Data from interview on October 14, 2008, in Save, Rwanda.

and even national level. A number of its members have gone on to become local, district, or even national leaders, most notably Speciose Mukandutiye, one of the founders of Duhozanye and now a deputy in the Parliament. Duhozanye was able to mobilize considerable support both nationally and internationally in the aftermath of the genocide, but funding for Duhozanye's work has been dwindling since 2003.

Duhozanye's *stance* on outstanding political issues in Rwanda today is more subtle than might be expected for a genocide widows' organization. For instance, on a national level, Duhozanye is associated with IBUKA (meaning "remember"), the "umbrella of survivors associations" in Rwanda.<sup>515</sup> Recall from Chapter Four that IBUKA is the organization that provided a clearly politically motivated translator for my meetings with recognized Hutu "rescuers." IBUKA's official position is that there are "very few" Hutu who helped Tutsi during the genocide, and even then that they normally did so only for some kind of gain.<sup>516</sup> Yet, Duhozanye's short booklet of testimonies made an (albeit modest) space to recognize Hutu who "saved" Tutsi during the genocide as "glimmers of hope," and about eight out of twelve Duhozanye interviewees told me stories of Hutu helping them survive. Furthermore, unlike some other genocide widows' organizations, Duhozanye also accepts members who are Hutu widows of Tutsi men, which alone is a small but important variance from the idea that only Tutsi widows are widows of the genocide. However, as Rombouts (2004) argues, by excluding Hutu widows who were victimized by the RPF (or "the war" as it is commonly called), Duhozanye may be viewed by some Hutu as "extremist."<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> Data from IBUKA brochure (n.d.). Rombouts (2004) states that Duhozanye is "independent" of IBUKA. As her statement conflicted with internal reports from Duhozanye, I corresponded with Patrice in April of 2011, at which point he said such a statement was a "lie," and could I please identify the source. This seemed a sharp response, but the issue of victims' rights is very charged in Rwanda.

<sup>516</sup> Interviews and informal conversations with IBUKA staff in January of 2008.

<sup>517</sup> Rombouts (2004) describes the claim that IBUKA and victims' organizations in general are viewed as politically "extremist": "That victim associations work solely for the interest of genocide [survivors] and not also for [RPF] victims causes discontent. At times, it is even labeled by some critics as extremist. According to their reasoning, all Rwandans are equal and no distinction should be made between them: victim associations should support equally all widows and orphans who live in harsh circumstances. Especially locally, this is the main reason why IBUKA is regarded an extremist organization by non-rescapes [non-survivors]. The fact that genocide and not war is the cause

It is beyond the scope of this study to reconcile the views of opposing sides in the Rwandan debate about who has suffered. What is important in understanding the subtleties of Duhozanye's political stance is that the association is not only involved in genocide victims' (i.e. Tutsi) interests. In fact, Duhozanye collaborates primarily with non-victims' organizations, as Rombouts (2004) describes (although she incorrectly states Duhozanye's independence from IBUKA):

First, some Rwandan victim organizations that are not involved in the IBUKA collective collaborate more with non-victim organizations than do IBUKA members. One such group is Duhozanye, the victim organizations operating in Save (province of Butare), and it engages most in bridging networks....The substance of collaboration mostly regards developmental issues to improve the socioeconomic status of association beneficiaries, and not victim-related issues. Remarkably, Duhozanye explicitly refers to Haguruka as the association with which it collaborates to legally defend the rights of its members, *rescapes* of the genocide. This is remarkable because IBUKA has two paralegals in the same province to assist genocide *rescapes* with judicial matters. Duhozanye seems to collaborate with Haguruka instead of IBUKA (p. 321).<sup>518</sup>

During the fieldwork phase of this study, I was not aware of the importance of establishing Duhozanye's relationship with IBUKA or with any other victims' organization. However, the data I gathered indicates that Duhozanye is not as independent of the politically charged victims' rights movement (represented by IBUKA) as Rombouts (2004) suggests. Yet, Duhozanye is also clearly occupied with much more than victims' rights, and this appears to be in keeping with the leaders' intention to promote the empowerment of women and contribute to the development of the country.

In short, Duhozanye leaders expressed no doubts or concerns to me about the government's stance on reconciliation in Rwanda, and the only comment I ever heard about the RPF referred to them as "those who won the country." Duhozanye has been honored by various

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of their suffering, it is argued, is not a sufficient justification to treat them better than those victimized by the [RPF], or by what is generally termed the war" (p. 336-338).

<sup>518</sup> As Rombouts' (2004) statement conflicted with internal reports from Duhozanye, I corresponded with Patrice in April of 2011, at which point he said such a statement was a "lie." This seems to be a reflection of how charged the topic is.

government entities (as shown in the *Program Activities* section) and appears to have favorable relations with the government. However, should the Tutsi-dominated RPF lose control of the government, as the people harassing Odetta and others clearly hope they will, Duhozanye's position could actually be quite tenuous.

#### *Case Summary (Duhozanye)*

Duhozanye is a genocide widows' organization founded in mid-1994 by hundreds of widows near the town of Save (Southern District). Two pivotal leaders of the association were widows themselves and brought together widows from the area because they were in dire need of help and had few family members left to help them. Many of the widows were also rape survivors. Initially coming together to "console each other" (as the name indicates), the widows soon decided they needed to work together on rudimentary housing and began by demanding their goods back from families that had stolen them during the genocide. Over the next couple of years, they built hundreds of houses for widows and diversified their activities into agriculture and animal husbandry; care and education of orphans; training for widows and orphans; and a variety of revenue-generating activity. They also conducted various trainings and activities in the area of reconciliation.

Due to dynamic leadership and program success, Duhozanye has enjoyed the support of various local, national, and international donors and leaders. Duhozanye's programmatic approach hinges on beliefs that women are the future of Rwanda; taking action rather than waiting for help; and in unity is strength. Apparent socioeconomic impacts of Duhozanye's programs were the improvement of economic welfare; replacement of families with Duhozanye "family"; and greater self-esteem or interest in living. Psychological effects seemed paradoxical and included fearlessness/ surrender and fierceness. Ongoing vulnerabilities the widows face include various kinds of harassment; "stones on the roof" thrown by ill-wishers; and having to negotiate living with Hutu.

Although Duhozanye does not claim reconciliation as one of its program areas, it is

clearly involved in reconciliation efforts as an organization and its members are involved in reconciliation efforts on a daily basis. Analysis of reconciliation at Duhozanye includes widows' reflections on being taught to forgive; having no choice but to forgive; forgiving and forgetting; reconciliation as working together; and various resistances and difficulties in reconciliation and forgiveness.

Duhozanye occupies a favorable but potentially tenuous position as a survivors' organization in Rwanda. Despite being easily associated by Hutu observers with a politically "extremist" (i.e., pro-Tutsi) element in Rwandan politics, in reality it seems that Duhozanye reaches beyond victims' concerns and into larger concerns of women's empowerment and rural development. It also holds a slightly larger view on genocide victimhood than most victims' organizations, in that it includes Hutu widows of Tutsi men.

## CHAPTER SIX: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

As described briefly in Chapter Four, I employed two tactics for cross-case analysis, including “forced comparisons” (Eisenhardt, 2002). This chapter describes the outcomes of that analytic process. First, it briefly reviews the importance of the selection of cases for this study. Then, it presents the results of the cross-case analysis along the dimensions of primary and secondary factors. The chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion of the two religious programs, AEE and PCR.

### Review of Case Selection

As discussed earlier, in Chapter Four, the final four cases of this study were selected for their similarity to each other (PCR and AEE) and for their dissimilarity to each other, in the expectation that the phenomenon of interest (i.e., transformative reconciliation) would be easier to develop by using such comparison and contrast.<sup>1</sup> Early in the study, I had sought cases of women’s organizations utilizing pathways of empathy and/or empowerment, in order to test the propositions guiding this research project. As the study expanded to include religious programs also, the propositions changed slightly, and the case selection process became clearer.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, having decided to include one religious program (Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation) where the data seemed to suggest transformative reconciliation was occurring, I decided to include a second case for comparison. That case was literally right under my nose: African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE). Wanting to also provide some contrast to the religious programs, and having four more programs I had studied in depth to choose from (one mixed gender

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<sup>1</sup> This constitutes what Yin (2003, p. 53) calls “literal replication,” where similar results across the cases might be found, and “theoretical replication” where cases have “contrasting results for predictable reasons.”

<sup>2</sup> For example, the broadening of the concept of empowerment to include spiritual empowerment, although not a new idea, was integrated into the study after it was expanded to include religious programs.

religious, and three women's programs), I eventually settled on Gahaya Links and Duhozanye for the final analysis.<sup>3</sup>

### Cross-Case Analysis

For the cross-case analysis, I employed two strategies recommended by Eisenhardt (2002) to counteract the tendency of a human research instrument to distort or poorly process information (Sadler, 2002). The two strategies used were: (1) contrasting the cases across selected relevant categories and dimensions, and (2) performing "forced comparisons" whereby I looked for differences where I expected similarities (i.e., PCR and AEE), and similarities where I expected differences (e.g., AEE and Duhozanye). These two methods worked well to both (1) tailor my findings to the relevant dimensions of this study and (2) find some unexpected and compelling similarities and differences. As it turned out, there was a lot of overlap between the two stages, and ultimately I put them all into the same table (discussed below).

In the first phase of cross-case analysis, I tried to visualize the areas of similarity and difference among the four organizations by putting a variety of relevant categories and subcategories on a table and defining where each organization stood in regards to that category and/or subcategory. The categories were broken up into Primary Factors and Secondary Factors. Primary Factors were the dimensions upon which the cases had been selected in the first place, as derived from one of the propositions discussed in Chapter Four, specifically: "Attending to both the past (through mutual empathy) and the future (empowerment) promotes transformative reconciliation." Thus, Primary Factors included empathy (with subcategories that include "for self and others like me" and "for the 'other'") and empowerment (with subcategories for "spiritual" and "social, economic,

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<sup>3</sup> As described in Chapter Four, I eliminated *Mbwira Ndumva* ("Speak I am Listening") because although I had collected a sizable amount of data, I did not have access to an essential part of its programming (counseling groups). I eliminated "Good Samaritans" because the data obtained (although very intriguing) was confusing and appeared to be unduly influenced by the founder.



political”). Secondary Factors were other important dimensions that might be expected to affect learning and reconciliation within organizations, including: size of organization, year founded, pedagogy, political standing, diversity, acknowledgement of suffering, acknowledgement and/or repentance of perpetration, religion, prevalence of rape, and other indicators. Each of these Secondary Factors had subcategories as well.

The fruitfulness of the analysis was actually in parsing out the categories and subcategories enough so that they could be “answered” for each organization with very few words, rather than mini-narratives or collections of notes to distinguish them from each other. By doing that I could see some patterns I expected, such as that PCR and AEE both have *structured* activities to promote empathy for the self and for the other. I also found patterns I did not expect, such as that Gahaya Links and Duhozanye were more similar across multiple dimensions than they had *felt* to me in my visits. In fact, they are notably different in some very critical areas, but I came to call these two (AEE/PCR and Gahaya Links/Duhozanye) “pairings” because the differences across the pairs were greater than the differences within.

The degree to which PCR and AEE are similar surpassed my expectations, and because their degree of similarity may indicate an approach with particular political/ psychological/ cultural cachet in Rwanda today, it is discussed at greater length in the section below, Comparison of Christian Reconciliation Programs. There are several areas in which all organizations are similar to each other, and others in which individual organizations are completely unique. Then there are within-pairing similarities and differences and cross-pairing similarities and differences. After I noted such similarities and differences, I started to perform forced comparisons. Some forced comparisons were more fruitful than others, so are shown in Table 6.1, while others were briefly considered and eliminated.

**Table 6.1 Cross-Case Comparison on Primary and Secondary Factors**

Category	Specific Comparison	PCR	AEE (Reconciliation Ministry Only)	GL	Duhozanye
<b>Primary Factors</b>					
<b>Empathy</b> <i>Dealing with Past</i>	For self and others like me	Structured	Structured	Unstructured	Structured
	For the “other”	Structured	Structured	Unstructured	<i>Extramural negotiation and advocacy</i>
<b>Empowerment</b> <i>Building Future</i>	Spiritual	Structured	Structured	Unstructured	Unstructured
	Social, economic, political	None	None <i>Ready access to associated programs</i>	Structured	Structured
<b>Secondary Factors</b>					
<b>Size of Organization</b>	Participants/members	~3000 participants ~100 leaders	~20,000 high level 100,000+ lower level	~4000	~4000
<b>Year of Foundation</b>		1995	1984 (i.e. pre-genocide)	~1996 2003 (incorporation)	1994
<b>Pedagogy</b>	Western Influence in Founding of Org	High	High	Moderate, <i>due to founders’ experience abroad</i>	None
	Empowering Approach	High	High, <i>but variable</i>	High	High, <i>with external challenges</i>
	Usage of multiple learning pathways (somatic, affective, cognitive, spiritual)	Structured blend <i>cognitive downplayed</i>	Structured blend <i>cognitive downplayed</i>	Unstructured blend, <i>but somatic involved in weaving</i>	Unstructured blend
<b>Political Standing</b>	Relations w/ government	Supported/supportive <i>Church-state linkages</i>	Supported/supportive <i>Strong Church-state linkages</i>	Supported/supportive <i>Women’s economic empowerment</i>	Supported/supportive <i>Victims’ organization</i>
	National/International Influence	Moderate <i>Evangelism</i>	High <i>Evangelism</i>	Moderate <i>International markets</i>	Moderate <i>Members &gt; leaders</i>
	Mission to Heal the Church	High	High	None	None
<b>Diversity</b>	Ethnic diversity	Structured	Structured	Semi-structured	Exclusive <i>Tutsi widows &amp; Hutu widows of Tutsi men</i>

	Experience categories	Structured <i>Close to political limits</i>	Structured <i>To political limits</i>	Semi-structured, <i>but potentially suppressed</i>	Exclusive <i>Widows of genocide</i>
	Religious diversity	Structured	Structured	Unstructured	Unstructured
	Approach to Gender	Paternalistic, <i>among local leaders</i>	Progressive, <i>but variable</i>	Women's empowerment	Women's empowerment <i>"demystifying culture"</i> <i>re: gender</i>
<b>Acknowledgement of Suffering</b>	Tutsi suffering	Structured	Structured	Unstructured, <i>but conveyed</i>	Structured
	Hutu suffering	Structured <i>Close to political limits</i>	Structured <i>To political limits</i>	Unstructured, <i>but potentially suppressed</i>	No indications in data
<b>Acknowledgement of Perpetration</b>	Tutsi perpetration	Unstructured, individual <i>Close to limits</i>	Structured, individual and collective <i>To political limits</i>	No indications in data <i>potentially dangerous</i>	No indications in data
	Hutu perpetration	Maximal <i>Inclusive of killers</i>	Maximal <i>Inclusive of killers</i>	Unstructured, <i>but conveyed</i>	Unstructured <i>but fully acknowledged</i>
<b>Religion</b>	Organizational level	Protestant, Evangelical <i>Personal relationship with Jesus</i>	Protestant, Evangelical <i>Personal relationship with Jesus</i>	None	None
	In population	Christian <i>Occasional others</i>	Christian <i>Some non-Christian populations served</i>	Mixed	Mixed, <i>but highly Catholic</i>
	Evangelism as priority	National: High International: High	National: High International: High	N/A	N/A
<b>Prevalence of Rape</b>	In Leadership	Low <i>Leadership mostly male</i>	Low but significant <i>Local leaders vary</i>	Unknown <i>Largely female</i>	High <i>Potentially majority</i>
	In population	Low, <i>but high with target groups</i>	Low, <i>but significant service of target groups</i>	Unknown <i>All female members</i>	High <i>Potentially majority</i>
<b>Other indicators</b>	Degree of Rurality	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Largely Rural
	Level of Education (leaders)	High	Very High	Moderate	Low

NOTE: The term "structured" simply means there is conscious effort to address the factor, while "unstructured" means there is not. A factor may exist at an organization (e.g., empathy at Gahaya Links) but without any intentional structure in place, it is referred to as "unstructured." Discussion in text provides explanation for conclusions.

### *Primary Factors*

First, on the crucial matter of the study, that of the employment of empathy and empowerment in promoting reconciliation, it seems clear from the data that the PCR/AEE pair employs a very much more intense (and intentional) degree of empathy, both for the self, and for the “other” than GL and Duhozanye do. I would call such empathy for self and other *mutual empathy*, the importance of which was established in Chapter Three. Although somewhat circumscribed by the political context, the retreat activities promoting mutual empathy at PCR and AEE are dramatic. At both organizations, recognition of Hutu suffering from displacement, theft, and guilt for being bystanders or *genocidaires* is quite typical. AEE goes significantly further than PCR, because it intentionally institutes acknowledgement and repentance for Tutsi perpetration (through the “identificational repentance” or “standing in the gap” practice). In some cases, even Hutu who have suffered from RPF abuses can have a hearing at AEE, which is really an exception among the four programs in this study, and in the broader Rwandan context.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not AEE’s exceptionality is due to its pre-genocide origins is uncertain, but it seems reasonable to assume that AEE’s pre-genocide tradition of speaking out against ethnic oppression would shape its post-genocide disposition in this area.<sup>2</sup>

The empathy pathway in the other two organizations, Gahaya Links and Duhozanye, is differently employed. Gahaya Links has very little structured activity to promote empathy, but the organization’s leadership deals with it when the need arises, and local groups appear to have their own processes of wrestling with their members’ histories. Tutsi suffering and Hutu perpetration is certainly more commonly expressed at the national level, but whether the local associations pull apart that dichotomy a bit more was hard to ascertain. Of note is the data indicating that when women weavers work with other women (quite literally side by side on

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<sup>1</sup> AEE is also exceptional for confronting familial wounds in its healing and reconciliation retreats, and has applied its model (through LeRucher) to other kinds of societal conflict. This broadened and deepened approach is one area of dissimilarity with PCR.

<sup>2</sup> Not the least because the beloved leader of pre-genocide AEE, Israel Havugimana, quite literally gave his life for the cause of inter-ethnic reconciliation (Rutayisire, 1995).

mats), they have breakthroughs in how they see themselves and each other, and their need to work together on common problems (such as domestic violence, alcoholism, and local leadership).

Duhozanye stands alone as the only organization that has structured activity for empathy “for self and others like me” but not for the “other.” We need not look far for an explanation for this singularity of purpose. The widows of Duhozanye have lost husbands, children, property, social positions, and in many cases their bodily integrity (through torture and rape). Furthermore, they are continually harassed as widows and rape victims, and as potential witnesses at *gacaca*. Even so, their strategies of negotiation and advocacy for dealing with hostile Hutu in their midst indicate an enormous amount of courage, if not empathy.

In the area of empowerment, it is more straightforward to treat the four organizations as pairs (PCR/AEE, and Gahaya Links/Duhozanye). It is notable that the first pair is very oriented towards spiritual empowerment, while the second pair is very oriented towards social, economic, and political empowerment, as was shown so simply and powerfully in their many mentions of having “oil for my skin” or money to send children/orphans to school. PCR is unique as the only organization that has nothing available in the area of social, economic, and political empowerment. AEE does not include any activities as such in its retreats, but its manner of operating in local communities and providing a variety of services means that a majority of participants in AEE retreats would have been reached by AEE’s other services.<sup>3</sup>

That only the first pair focus on spiritual empowerment is to be expected; the first pair of organizations is religious and the second has no structure of religious practice. However, it may be more fruitful to think of the difference as one of meaning-making. On that count, the first pair is clearly very engaged in trying to make meaning (albeit biblical) of the genocide, one’s survival from it (or related events) and one’s mission in life moving forward from healing. Gahaya Links is quite a bit less deliberate in promoting meaning-making, while Duhozanye appears to assist

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, many participants come to the retreats after already benefiting from other AEE services.

women in meaning-making within the perimeter of their own experience. However, an important aspect to consider is that the religious programs (and Christians themselves) have the meaning-making challenge of confronting the deeply troublesome issue of the involvement of the churches in the genocide. That history provides salience to the notion that they are “wounded healers” in need of healing to move forward in the ministry of reconciliation.

### *Secondary Factors*

Secondary factors were integrated as they arose in my category development and “forced comparisons.” Some were identified as potentially associated with how the organizations promoted transformative learning or transformative reconciliation, while others were identified in poring over the data and seeing something really unique about an organization—which then prompted me to compare the others along this dimension. A few of these have been mentioned already within the discussion of Primary Factors. Among the others, only those that warrant further elaboration are discussed here.

### *Political Standing*

As described in the case reports in Chapter Five, every one of the four organizations enjoys supportive relationships with the government. Duhozanye, as a victims’ organization, can be viewed as one of a set of organizations aligned with the government of Rwanda, although it does engage more largely in activities for women’s empowerment and rural development. Gahaya Links is also clearly aligned with the government of Rwanda, as both its leaders were members of the RPF in Uganda. As a reflection of the organization’s standing and orientation, the frequency with which the weavers’ reflections on reconciliation conjoined the terms “reconciliation” and “unity” (or were simply replaced with “unity”) closely resembles the government’s own conjoining of the terms “unity” and “reconciliation” (Burnet, 2005).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The term “unity” was certainly used in the other organizations, but in a distinctively different way from how the term “reconciliation” was used. In these cases, “unity” referred more to working together in peace, whereas “reconciliation” was a more personal coming to terms with what had happened. At Gahaya Links, the terms were almost never separately used.

It is only the first pair (PCR/AEE) that carries the burden of needing to heal divisions within and between the churches *and* between the churches and the population. In one sense, we can view PCR/AEE as wrestling with the victim/perpetrator tension, while GL/Duhozanye are pretty squarely in the victims category; as women who have been kept down in the Gahaya Links case, and as widows and survivors of genocide and rape in the Duhozanye case. Yet in another sense, “healing of the heart of Rwanda” is a mission for which the churches have been charged by the state, and from which the churches (and by extension religious programs) are gaining a lot of influence. The gains in influence have been shown in the partnerships PCR and AEE have, the participants they recruit, the outreach they make to the government, their support of government programs, and their increasingly central role in Christian evangelism throughout the region, continent, and world. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

### *Approach to Gender*

The PCR/AEE pair approach gender issues and equity quite differently than GL/Duhozanye. This is not surprising; after all, the latter pair serves *all* women, while the former pair serves mixed populations. Gahaya Links really is about women’s empowerment more than anything else, and treats it as *the* pathway to unity and reconciliation. Duhozanye is integrally involved in local reconciliation, but recovery and empowerment for women is primary. Duhozanye set out to “demystify the culture” in regards to what women could and should do for themselves, largely driven out of necessity after the genocide, but also out of the leader’s own childhood experience and belief that “Women can do anything that men can do!”<sup>5</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, PCR and AEE are part of a continuation of largely male power in the churches (Cantrell, 2007). However, there are some notable differences between the two organizations, as indicated in Table 6.1, where I labeled PCR’s approach to gender as “paternalistic, *among local leaders*,” but AEE’s approach to gender as “progressive *but variable*.” At PCR, all the facilitators I met (approximately 10) were mature men in their

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<sup>5</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on September 17, 2008 in Save, Rwanda.



50s, 60s, and 70s. With the exception of Molly Rouner, PCR facilitators are, to my knowledge, all men, whereas some facilitators at AEE are women. In fact, when I talked to Francois about attending an AEE retreat, he gave me six recommendations of people to “see in action.” Of those, four were women.<sup>6</sup> Recall also that the AEE retreat was designed by Rhiannon Lloyd, a woman who traveled all over Rwanda for the first couple of years after the genocide, leading AEE retreats.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, interpretations of key Scriptures at the three PCR retreats I attended reflected gender biases that were not discernible in the scriptural discussions held at the three AEE retreats I attended. For example, the story of Elijah hiding under the tree was presented as the loss of courage women have because they are more easily afraid.<sup>8</sup> As a mature woman myself at a PCR retreat, I was still introduced by Peter as a “girl” because I have no children, whereas a male visitor (also without children) was invited to introduce himself “as a man.” A female European volunteer for PCR told me she had been referred to (though not introduced) as “half a woman” for the same reason at a previous retreat. The intimation is clear in Rwandan culture— we are due a lower level of respect, indeed we are cursed (as shown in Chapter Two).<sup>9</sup> Beyond the sting I felt on a personal level, this was troublesome to me because of the great numbers of women who were raped during the genocide and infected with HIV/AIDS or otherwise rendered incapable of bearing children—some of whom PCR would not be able to identify as such and therefore tailor their approach for. AEE retreats were noticeably different on this front, and I do not recall any reading or teaching that was delivered in a sexist manner. Regarding rape, I was fortunate enough to see one AEE leader’s approach to rape, having

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<sup>6</sup> Data from interview with Francois, reconciliation ministry leader, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda.

<sup>7</sup> AEE’s activities outside its reconciliation ministry can also be seen as relatively progressive in terms of women’s empowerment.

<sup>8</sup> Data from fieldnotes, July 26, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> These statements call into question whether PCR’s local leaders are truly engaged in the ministry of reconciliation, as Rouner (2002, p. 19) describes it: “The ministry of reconciliation is thus the ministry of new life, of new creation. Sexism, racism, and culture wars are eliminated, not by mere tolerance that leaves people separate, but the kind of engagement that brings people together.”

attended a retreat for rape victims. At this retreat, the leader spoke directly to the question of self-worth after rape, saying, “Christ sees you for who you are, not what happened to you. In his love, we are all healed. Because of him, you are as clean as the day you were born. You are virgins— more clean, pure, and beautiful than words can say.”<sup>10</sup> Not surprisingly, there were tears running down several women’s faces during his speech.

### *Pedagogy*

The subcategories of the secondary factor “pedagogy” included the degree of Western influence in the founding of the program, approach to empowerment, and usage of multiple learning pathways. Because there is also some discussion on pedagogy and learning in Chapter Seven, and in the comparison of Christian reconciliation programs found below, coverage here is brief. On the matter of Western influence of programming, both PCR and AEE were high due to Western influences in the design of retreats; Gahaya Links was moderate because of the experience and education abroad of both of its leaders; and Duhozanye had literally no Western influence in establishing its programs (although it has benefited from Western support agencies). All four organizations promoted empowerment in different ways. Duhozanye and Gahaya Links were very active in women’s socioeconomic empowerment, and Duhozanye made additional efforts to promote political empowerment among women. Yet, Duhozanye faced particular external challenges in rural women’s empowerment, namely harassment of widows. Gahaya Links and Duhozanye did not employ spiritual learning to any appreciable degree. Despite the frequency of references to God and the likelihood of significantly high religiosity among both organizations’ populations, there is no biblical aspect of programming at these organizations, no impetus to evangelize, and no solemn rituals for healing and reconciliation. These women’s

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<sup>10</sup> However, for the comparison to be valid, I would have had to witness a PCR retreat for rape victims. I do not know whether PCR ever serves groups made entirely of rape victims, but if it does, I feel confident the Rouners would make major adjustments and the local leaders would make some adjustments. I do not intend to suggest heartlessness on the part of local leaders, only lack of awareness.

organizations are about women's empowerment, whereas PCR and AEE are about healing and evangelization.

Regarding the use of multiple learning pathways, all four organizations used all four pathways of learning (somatic, spiritual, affective, and cognitive) to some extent. However, none of them employed the cognitive avenue to engage in "critical discourse" about the roots of conflict, structural violence, access to power in Rwanda today, or anything else of that nature. In fact, PCR and AEE were quite deliberate about the blending of learning pathways. Both organizations facilitated the recognition and sharing of personal wounds (affective), performed rituals such as carrying the wounds to the Cross and washing of the feet (somatic) to further support healing, supported spiritual surrender and empowerment (spiritual), and pored over biblical texts and listened to teachings on, for example, the negative consequences of unforgiveness (cognitive). More pedagogical observations about PCR and AEE are discussed in the section, Comparison of Christian Reconciliation Programs, below.

### *Degree of Rurality*

An interrelated factor of note, especially in regards to Duhozanye, is the potential complicating factor of rural vs. urban life. Although all four organizations had associations or retreats throughout the country, only Duhozanye was primarily rural (with the city of Butare within its service area). Duhozanye's rurality is associated with a relatively low level of education, both among the leadership and the membership. Duhozanye is the only organization among the four with a leader who speaks only *Kinyarwanda*, although my esteem for Daphrose's intelligence and wisdom cannot be surpassed.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, evangelical churches preaching healing and reconciliation (and promoting encounters between different people) do not appear to be thriving in rural areas the way they are in Kigali.<sup>12</sup> In fact, most of Duhozanye's membership

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<sup>11</sup> In fact, national leaders for all the other three organizations speak English. The most senior leaders at PCR and AEE also speak French, while the leaders/founders of Gahaya Links do not speak French.

<sup>12</sup> Data from fieldnotes and interviews (2006-2011).

is still Catholic, attending the churches they attended before the genocide.<sup>13</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, a startling number of Catholic churches were the sites of large massacres, and some clergy participated in the killing (Des Forges, 1999; Longman, 2010; Rittner et al, 2004). Yet, the Catholic churches have not been as heavily involved in reconciliation efforts as the Protestant churches have been, and have tended to teach forgiveness as an obligation, which is reflected in the Duhozanye data.<sup>14</sup>

An additional complicating factor in regards to Duhozanye is the prevalence of rape among leaders and members (see Table 6.1). Leaders of all four organizations in this study stated that rape is “harder to forgive” than any other crime, perhaps because it is a crime that “keeps on happening,” in that social, emotional, and physical wounds from it are humiliating and continuous.<sup>15</sup> Far from being able to escape the rapists as they would if they lived in the city or had the means to move away, the widows often live in villages with the men who raped them, many of whom deny their actions.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, having also lost husbands and children, the widows are in precarious social positions that are visible to all around them—facts which likely do not assist them in having expansive experiences of reconciliation.

It is hard to know how these interrelated secondary factors have affected the relatively low levels of *transformative* reconciliation I sensed at Duhozanye. Despite very compelling data on changing ideas about their gender and their family/social system, on the whole Duhozanye members appeared to have had only modest changes in how they viewed ethnic identities or historical events. Furthermore, dependencies on men (as for example with the statement that “a woman without a husband in Rwanda is nothing”) appeared to be replaced to some degree with a dependency on Duhozanye, and especially Daphrose as their new “husband.”<sup>17</sup> This

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<sup>13</sup> Data from interview of Daphrose on September 27, 2008 in Save, Rwanda. Duhozanye is located in Save, the site of the very first Catholic Church in Rwanda (Longman, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Data from interview of Rutayisire on July 27, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda. Other interviewees gave similar impressions.

<sup>15</sup> The interview that most clearly covered this point was with Clara, leader at Duhozanye, on January 7, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Data from interview of Clara and Daphrose on January 7, 2009 in Save, Rwanda.

<sup>17</sup> Data from multiple interviews of Duhozanye members (2008).

displacement seems to be culturally appropriate, materially essential, spiritually fortuitous, and emotionally life-giving. Whether or not it reflects *perspective transformation* seemed less clear to me.

### *Capacity Building*

Finally, it must be noted that all four organizations are similar in that they attempt to promote reconciliation (of one kind or another) through a variety of capacity-building measures. With AEE/PCR, it is helping leaders to heal so that they can go on to train others and thus “heal the heart of Rwanda.” With GL/Duhozanye it is building the capacities of women to take charge of their own lives and/or improve the lives of their families.

### Comparison of the Christian Reconciliation Programs

Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR) and African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) are very similar programs in ways that are critical to understanding transformative reconciliation in the Rwandan context, while they are also sufficiently different to suggest pedagogically important issues in reconciliation. This section discusses the similarities and differences between the AEE and PCR retreat formats, pedagogical observations, and the primary factors of empathy and empowerment at AEE and PCR.

#### *Retreat Format*

Healing and reconciliation retreats at PCR and AEE are remarkably similar, even in their name: “healing and reconciliation retreat.” Both utilize a variety of biblical teachings in combination with psychological principles to facilitate healing and reconciliation. However, AEE’s psychological inputs are more elaborate (including familial wounds) and its biblical teachings more varied and numerous throughout a retreat. Both organizations utilize a progression of teachings, activities, and rituals. The AEE progression begins with a consideration of God’s intention and involvement in human affairs (and specifically acceptance that men, not God, are the “author” of genocide). PCR’s progression begins with “coming apart

and rest[ing] a while” with Jesus, but then considers the role of free will, and God’s pain at our separation from Him.

A pivotal moment in each organization’s retreat is the recognition of each person’s profound wounding (captured by the phrase “wounded healer,” used in both organizations). In AEE, personal wounds are reflected upon and written on a piece of paper, then shared in a small intimate group. At PCR, each person shares his/her wounds orally with a group of three or in the larger retreat group. Importantly, participants at both retreats ultimately carry these wounds “to the Cross” so that Jesus can help them carry their burdens. Both organizations stress Jesus’ ability to carry any and all wounds, whether they derive from being a victim or perpetrator (or both), i.e., the “entire tragedy of the human condition” (Lloyd & Nyamutera, 2010). At PCR, participants simply kneel at the Cross in the center of the room, and others gather around touching them and praying for them as they ask/cry/plead with Jesus to help them carry the burden. At AEE, participants nail their wounds (papers) to a wooden Cross, and then burn them in what is usually a very solemn ceremony.

Both organizations strongly emphasize the development of a very personal relationship with Jesus, which is characteristic of Protestant (as opposed to Catholic) approaches, and which is a new kind of relationship for many Christian Rwandans, even those who were Protestant before (Rouner, 2002). This is exemplified by the phrase, “Come apart and rest a while” (at PCR), and similar teachings such as, “Let me do the hurting instead of you” (at AEE), and by the emphasis both organizations place on setting aside participants’ concerns for their communities and families to attend to their own need for healing.

After the healing at the Cross, both organizations make a shift (although this is not articulated in their materials) from personal healing to social healing. At PCR, this shift is indicated by the teachings on the ministries of reconciliation and love, the importance of repentance and forgiveness, and in particular the servant ministry as acted out in the washing of each other’s feet. Through these teachings, there are many spontaneous gestures and proclamations of confession, repentance, and forgiveness. Joining in a common identity as

“reconcilers” and “ambassadors” from the “tribe of Jesus” here on earth, PCR participants then celebrate their Last Supper together. At AEE, a slightly different progression of events follows the Cross ceremony. Moving on to the “ceiling” of the metaphorical house (which is repentance and forgiveness), participants explore God’s intentions regarding diversity in human communities, and begin to form an identity beyond tribe, ethnicity or nation, becoming instead “members of His nation.” They also participate in the very dramatic activity of “standing in the gap,” where first the retreat leaders and perhaps some participants repent for their collective identity (Hutu or Tutsi, Protestant or Catholic, White or Black) and the pain they have caused the other group. PCR retreats do have some occasions that might be called “standing in the gap,” especially when the Rouners are there to beg forgiveness for the West’s inaction during the genocide. But at AEE, “standing in the gap” is a core part of a retreat. As Steward (2009, p. 185) observes, “Such statements and apologies are extremely rare in Rwanda.”

### *Pedagogical Observations*

Both AEE and PCR developed their retreat models with significant input from Westerners: in the case of AEE, a Christian psychiatrist specializing in conflict-induced trauma; and in the case of PCR, a pastoral minister and his wife trained in psychology. However, AEE’s early reconciliation ministry began before the genocide and its post-genocide retreat model was handed over to Rwandans in 1997, and has been carried forth by thousands of local leaders, while PCR was begun after the genocide and its founders still lead several retreats a year.

Regarding pedagogical methods at the retreats, both organizations activate learning in cognitive, affective, spiritual, and cognitive domains, although neither program engages in the cognitive activity of “rational discourse” or “critical analysis” as construed by transformative learning theorists. Retreatants do study scriptures at length in small groups, and there are short inputs/lectures on such topics as the emotional cost of unforgiveness. But at no time in either retreat format is there an *analysis* of the causes of genocide, the current social and political context, the historical construction of corporate identities, or any other similar topic. However,

both organizations make concerted efforts to recruit participants who come from all but the most excluded of experience categories (i.e., Hutu victimized by the RPF), *and* to have them attend the same retreats. There it is hoped they will share their difficult experiences, learn from each other, and undergo profound (even transformative) reconciliation. AEE makes a significantly stronger effort than PCR to include marginalized populations in its programs (such as children heading households, prostitutes, street children, and even non-Christian populations), which is in keeping with its much broader mission to empower communities throughout Rwanda.<sup>18</sup> Most importantly, AEE appears to venture (as indicated in Table 6.1) *to political limits* by allowing seemingly limited mention of RPF crimes, whereas PCR only ventures *close to political limits*.

A major difference between the two organizations is that AEE has adapted its healing and reconciliation retreats to a broader range of populations and serves those populations by training much larger numbers of “really good” retreatants to deliver retreats for other groups.<sup>19</sup> This certainly increased AEE’s reach, but it appeared to have an impact on the consistency and quality of the three AEE retreats that I attended. For example, as described in Chapter Five, one AEE retreat I attended was for a group of teachers who had been required to attend the retreat. Besides being compulsory, which may not bode well for heartfelt reconciliation, the retreat was led by a young unmarried man of perhaps 25 years of age. The teachers were mostly women in their 40s and 50s. He lectured from a raised stage to the participants who were seated in schoolchildren’s desks and chairs, neatly arranged in rows and facing the stage. The retreat leader frequently tossed his chalk up in the air, and regularly quizzed the participants on what they had understood of his teaching. When the participants chattered amongst themselves, sometimes in seeming response to what he was saying, he slapped his palm on his table to get their attention. When it came time to split into small groups for the sharing of wounds, he

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<sup>18</sup> Twa are not at all represented at PCR (and one leader at PCR described the Twa as “lazy” and “un-Christian” to me), but AEE programs do reach the Twa population to some extent (data from interview of Francois, reconciliation ministry leader at AEE, on July 31, 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda).

<sup>19</sup> Data from interview of Francois on July 31, 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda. In contrast, PCR does not attempt to reach so many populations, and therefore has fewer facilitators and retreats. At PCR, there was very little variation in the curriculum or approach of the retreat, although at times the group was larger than Rouner’s (2002) ideal of 12-15.



assertively decided who should go together. Some participants objected, and he responded by stating that just as they were reluctant to be together, surely they would be reluctant to split up later. When they returned from their small groups (usually very emotional gatherings at AEE retreats), he delivered the normal lectures to prepare them for the “Cross workshop,” but took several phone calls while doing so.<sup>20</sup>

During this particular retreat, I spoke quietly with Francois, one of the leaders of the reconciliation ministry at AEE, and he affirmed that the facilitator was not very mature or very good, but was “about average.” I actually felt that Francois was a bit embarrassed and dismayed at the facilitation (having invited me to the retreat), but at no time did he intervene, although he was the senior leader and a very warm, humble, and mature facilitator in his own right. What concerned me most was that the stance of the young facilitator did not appear to demonstrate empathy towards the participants, many of whom would have experienced the genocide while he was out of the country.<sup>21</sup> Untypically for an AEE retreat, many participants simply stopped coming, or arrived very late to sessions.<sup>22</sup> While some of the interviews from this retreat were still quite favorable, people did not rush up to speak with me about their experience the way they did at the other retreats. I also noted a much lower level of body language indicating involvement (eye contact, verbal responses to the facilitator, nodding and questioning with others) than at the other two retreats.

Participants at PCR retreats are intentionally recruited from multiple areas of the country, and therefore usually do not know any or many of the other participants. AEE participants are much more likely to know each other, as they are recruited locally. This can be expected to have some effect on the support systems in place after the retreat, and for the program’s reach,

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<sup>20</sup> Taking phone calls during meetings is not uncommon in Rwanda (as leaving messages is not possible with the cell phone service), but the length and frequency of his calls did seem distracting.

<sup>21</sup> Francois actually stated to me that the leader lacked empathy, noting the important differences between sympathy, empathy, and compassion (data from fieldnotes, August 1, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Although arriving late is very common in Rwandan culture, not returning at all is seen as an indication that something is very wrong. Francois told me most people left that retreat, saying they did not want to talk about that sad stuff again, but he also stated that early departures were very uncommon for an AEE retreat (data from fieldnotes, August 1, 2007).

although I did not inquire about these issues. Curiously, AEE holds a two-day follow up retreat several months after the main retreat (in part to discuss support systems), while PCR does not, although it seems PCR participants might be more in need of that time back together. As described in Chapter Five, both organizations have a significant number of people who have taken multiple retreats, and who note that their healing, forgiveness, and/or reconciliation has taken several retreats to take root. Both organizations mention many people “coming to Christ” as a positive outcome of their retreats, which is not at all unexpected given their emphasis on evangelization. AEE’s mission states this plainly, but its approach is much broader and its service to non-Christian communities appears to be greater. PCR does not state this its evangelical mission as plainly, but the lauded outcome of a PCR workshop is to carry the Cross to all of Rwanda— and indeed, Rwanda is felt to be the “frontline” for a worldwide Christian revival (Rouner, 2001, p. 83). Muslims have attended both organizations’ retreats, but no special adjustments are made to the retreat, least of all the taking of one’s wounds to the Cross.

Lastly, the teaching methods at both AEE and PCR are *relatively* non-hierarchical, although this varied quite a bit and might be seen as a quality input from the Westerners who designed the retreat models. PCR retreats are conducted in circles rather than rows, and there is no elevated stand from which the retreat leaders speak. AEE retreats varied, but two of three that I observed had participants sitting in a circle. Also, much of the retreat experience depends on participant risk-taking and engagement in small groups, and the relative absence of lecture-style teachings. That said, the teaching I observed at PCR (keeping in mind I did not see the Rouners lead a retreat) was clearly preaching, but that is a style Rwandans are very familiar (and perhaps most comfortable) with. In contrast, two of the AEE retreats I observed had noticeably less preaching, while the third (the teachers retreat) was led in the manner of teachers speaking to children.

### *Primary Factors at PCR and AEE*

Clearly, both Christian organizations promote a very deep empathetic engagement with one's own suffering (through the sharing of personal wounds, and the Cross activities), as well as for the suffering of others (through listening to the wounds of others, repentance for personal and/or collective sins, and forgiveness). In particular, AEE's practice of "standing in the gap" is a dramatic show of empathy for the suffering of the other group. PCR did not have as structured a practice, but personal statements of repentance and confession were common at PCR retreats.<sup>23</sup>

Culturally speaking, the level of empathetic engagement created at AEE and PCR is difficult to reach in Rwanda, where ethnic and other tensions run very deep, and men especially are discouraged from any open expression of weakness, grief, or sorrow (as reflected in the Rwandan saying that "a man's tears should run into his stomach). AEE confronts this issue directly in its curriculum, teaching on the "transcultural model of Jesus Christ" and the negative impacts of suppressing emotions, while PCR opens the door to the expression of emotion by inviting participants to "come apart and rest awhile" with Jesus. Both appear to be effective in this area.<sup>24</sup>

Both programs also contribute significantly to empowerment, although in different ways. PCR is peripherally associated with many projects that promote socioeconomic empowerment, simply because its leaders are involved in these projects. AEE is directly involved in many socioeconomic and even political empowerment projects, and has a well-articulated empowerment ("self-help") approach. AEE participants are likely to be beneficiaries of other AEE initiatives, which is not true to the same extent with PCR participants. But more

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<sup>23</sup> Of note is the fact that at both AEE and PCR retreats, when Westerners are present it is typical for them to "stand in the gap" and repent for the sins of the West in helping to create Rwanda's situation and failing to act in the country's greatest moment of need. I expected to do so at an AEE retreat, but did not have the occasion. I did stand in the gap (so to speak) early in my first PCR retreat, but did not realize the importance of my action at the moment I did it.

<sup>24</sup> From what I could ascertain about the development of the model, Lloyd actively incorporated feedback on cultural issues from Rwandan co-leaders at AEE, whereas the Rouners were less descriptive about how they had incorporated cultural considerations into PCR's retreat model. Even when I asked for more detail, Rouner described the development of the model as largely intuitive and God-given (data from phone interview of Rouner on January 15, 2011). However, Rwandan facilitators appear to be free to adapt as they wish in the Rouners' absence.

importantly, if one views empowerment (as I do) as “attending to the future” and specifically one’s hopes, dreams, ability to imagine a better future for one’s self and one’s children, and/or a sense of purpose in life, then empowerment may be socioeconomic, spiritual, affective, or political. This is one of the key propositions of this study, and helps to explain the sense of elation and optimism expressed by participants of economic empowerment programs *and* spiritual reconciliation programs (as discussed further in Chapter Seven).

As shown in Chapter Five, participants of both AEE and PCR retreats frequently described feeling as if God has a special purpose for them (or that He saved them from death for a reason). The need to make meaning of such profound suffering is explicit in AEE’s approach (specifically the key teachings on “finding God in the midst of suffering”), and implicitly in PCR’s approach. The sense of purpose born of suffering is either found or renewed during a retreat, and every case I heard led specifically to a commitment to work for Rwandan recovery and/or reconciliation. Such outcomes are familiar to transformative-learning scholars as the need to make meaning (Mezirow, 1978b; Daloz et al, 1996; Kegan, 1982; Courtenay et al, 1998; Merriam & Caffarella, 2007). More to the point, that such suffering leads to a sense of mission in life has been recognized by many contributors to transformative learning theory, including Courtenay et al (1998), Tisdell (2000), Kovan and Dirkx (2003), Daloz et al (1996), Tedeschi (1999), and Frankl (1959). For example, McAdams and Bowman’s (2001) “redemptive sequence” (shown in Chapter Three) specifically refers to how an emotionally negative story can be turned into an emotionally positive story, which thereby redeems and gives meaning to the negative events that came before.

Both AEE and PCR also have early teachings on the human authorship/free will behind the genocide, as opposed to it being God’s will or desire. So there is a sense of human power implied in these teachings, at the same time as there is a surrender to God’s will implied in the phrase, “If I am an ambassador, then I represent someone else. I am not free to live for myself. I

live for Jesus, and I represent Him.”<sup>25</sup> This very fine, almost paradoxical, distinction between feeling powerful and purposeful on the one hand, and surrendering completely to God’s will on the other, is discussed in more depth in Chapter Seven.

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<sup>25</sup> As shown in Chapter Five, this expression was common at PCR.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter brings together a number of conclusions from this study, and discusses implications for both theory and practice. It begins with conclusions based on the study's constructs; specifically transformative learning and transformative reconciliation as seen within the four organizations, as well as the propositions guiding the study. Next is a set of important observations about post-conflict reconciliation in Rwanda, based on what was learned in the four organizations. These observations fall into several areas, including: the differential experiences and contributions of women to reconciliation; the cultural and political factors that make Christian-based models of reconciliation particularly salient in Rwanda; and the potential of localized grassroots efforts at reconciliation, as contrasted to the top-down approaches favored in most post-conflict reconciliation efforts. Then the chapter turns to theory-building concerns, first summarizing the contributions and areas for further research in transformative learning theory and then defining how this study helps to move us towards a theory of transformative reconciliation. Finally, the chapter closes with eight recommendations for reconciliation programming in post-conflict environments.

### Conclusions: Transformative Learning and Transformative Reconciliation

Based on analysis of data collected for each of the four organizations, including participant observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, documents, and other items peculiar to each program, as well on a large variety of data from the overall Rwandan context, two sets of conclusions about the learning that tends to occur in each of the four organizations are provided here. The first set of conclusions pertains to transformative learning and the second to transformative reconciliation.

#### *Transformative Learning in Organizations*

Recall from Chapter Two that transformative learning is described in a number of ways. Mezirow describes it as calling into question our “taken for granted frames of reference...to

make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally able to change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (2003a, p. 3). This description is typically positive, “celebratory” assessment of transformative learning that few have questioned (Taylor, 2007, p. 181), although this study does raise doubts about assuming positive directionality. Different theorists argue that the learning avenues by which persons undergo transformation may be cognitive (Merriam, 2004), affective (Dirkx, 2006), intuitive (Daloz, 1986), spiritual (Tisdell, 2003), somatic (Amann, 2003), and presumably two or more of these combined. Mezirow (2000) and others (e.g., Merriam, 2004) argue that transformative learning requires critical reflection, discourse, and action, but what these mean, how they proceed, and how far they have to go to be transformative is a matter of debate. This study argues that reflection need not be dependent on cognition; that transformative learning may occur where there is limited opportunity for critical discourse and may not be positive; and that social action is shaped by context.

A notable contribution to the theory of transformative learning that pertains especially to this study is the concept of the “catalytic experience” (Courtenay et al, 1998). Where the genocide (and related events) can be viewed as the “disorienting dilemma” (Mezirow, 1978a; 1978b), and the “initial reaction” to it may endure for months or years, the “catalytic experience” sets into motion the meaning making process (Courtenay et al, 1998). Viewed in this way, the retreats at Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation (PCR) and African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE), and key moments that occur at Gahaya Links and Duhozanye are catalytic experiences that help precipitate the meaning making process, and therefore transformative learning. Yet, although a level of acceptance or even “reconciliation” with the disorienting dilemma of genocide may be displayed, it should not be assumed that a person who has made peace on some level with the genocide has had a “catalytic experience” or has undergone perspective transformation.

Gaining a sense for whether each organization was actually promoting transformative learning entailed listening to and watching closely the ways in which people expressed themselves and interacted with others. In particular, I was listening and watching for how they

viewed themselves and their community differently than before; what impact engaging with the “other” had had upon them; how they viewed ethnicity, identity, and gender; and what meaning they had made of the crisis and their place in it. As the case reports in Chapter Five displayed in detail, there were indicators of transformative learning in every one of the four cases of this study. All four organizations were engaged with adult learners after an extremely disorienting crisis, and had at a minimum the goal of changing something quite fundamental in Rwandans’ views of themselves. At Duhozanye, one goal was “demystifying Rwandan culture” regarding gender, while at PCR, a key aim was helping people to recognize their role as “ambassadors of Jesus” here on earth.

Taking the two religious programs (PCR and AEE) together, the evidence from this study indicates that they were both very effective at promoting transformative learning. This finding is reflected in how participants described themselves before the retreat, as opposed to afterwards; in their expanded relationship to God; in their sense of mission and purpose moving forward from the retreat; and in the many statements they made about feeling “like a new person,” “a new creature,” and as if “my new life has begun.” A blending of learning avenues (spiritual, affective, somatic and cognitive to a lesser extent) to support deep engagement with one another was evident in the use of rituals, intimate spaces and touch, biblical discussion and reflection, and empathetic engagement with one another. Without a longitudinal study, it is unclear how enduring such perspective transformations are, although the fact that many interviews were conducted with people who had attended retreats well beforehand indicates at least some degree of durability. In sum, my conclusion is that PCR and AEE retreats (and their surrounding preparation and follow up) promote transformative learning for many participants.

The evidence from this study also indicates that Gahaya Links was very effective at promoting transformative learning of a form that is more recognizable to early transformative learning theorists. Women at Gahaya commonly expressed having seen themselves in very limited ways before (e.g., being “overlooked” or “having nothing to contribute”) as compared to the way they see themselves now (as leaders and contributors to family and community life).



They reported greater self-esteem and self-worth, as reflected in their many statements of having “oil for my skin” (discussed below). They also reported their communities and families having greater esteem for them. They clearly felt a higher degree of control over the events of their lives (e.g., sending their kids to school, having their husbands help them in house chores or in the business), as well as an enhanced sense of hope and possibility for their futures. Again, whether these changes would endure (especially if Rwanda entered a severe social, political, or economic crisis again) is uncertain, although it seems the rising leadership of women weavers in their communities reflects some durable change.

Finally, Duhozanye also appears to promote transformative learning among its members, especially in the areas of gender and social ties. Although a number of expressions by interviewees reflected disempowered stances (e.g., “not hav[ing] anything to do about” the presence of killers and rapists in their midst), interviewees also described having never believed that women could do the things they were doing, such as wearing pants, building houses, and supporting themselves without men. They spoke of finding a deeper source of great strength, and were delighted to report their discovery that women can do anything, “even rebuild the country!” Importantly, they acted on these new beliefs, confronting those who had stolen their goods; demanding action on harassment of widows from the authorities; and taking on leadership roles in local and national affairs. Returning to Mezirow’s early description of transformative learning among women in re-entry programs:

Transformative learning demands, first of all, self-examination, a critical appraisal of sex-role assumptions, and alienation from past social roles and expectation. Beyond that, it requires exploring options for new ways of living and making provisional efforts to try out new roles; playing with new roles will build competence and consequently self-confidence (1978a, p. 7).

In the aftermath of genocide, the women of Duhozanye took on new learning demands, if for no other reason than that they simply had to do so. Their social relationships also underwent massive change. Where before they depended on their husbands and families, they now refer to

Duhozanye as their “family,” and sometimes to the leader Daphrose as their “husband,” “mother,” or “grandmother” (even if she is younger). Many reported that Duhozanye was the only reason they were still alive. However, outside Duhozanye they were often attacked because of the low status of widows; their potentially damning testimony at the *gacaca*; and because they were so often rape victims and therefore subject to social derision. They were visibly at ease among other Duhozanye members, and noticeably less so outside organization headquarters. The allegiance they had for Duhozanye and for the leader in particular was profound, and resembled the “transfer of identification from one reference group to another” that Mezirow (1978a, p. 17) noted as problematic (and untransformed) in his original study. However, just as considering the context of women’s consciousness in America in the 1970s is essential to interpreting Mezirow’s findings (Clark & Wilson, 1991), it is important to closely consider the context of transformational learning for these women of Duhozanye. It is hard to know how learning would differ for these women if the context were more supportive of them. If it were possible to reduce their harassment, to soften the social and psychological burdens of rape, and to offer more access to training and education that responds to *their* needs, things might be different. In short, Duhozanye members achieve a remarkable amount of transformative learning, although that learning is not individualistic in the manner transformative learning theory presumes.

### *Transformative Reconciliation in Organizations*

As discussed in Chapter Two, the concept of “transformative reconciliation” is occasionally hinted at in the literature, but inadequately described or developed. In fact, even the definition of reconciliation is inconsistent across multiple disciplines (Quinn, 2009a; Hamber & Kelly, 2009), ranging from simply living together without violence to achieving states of previously unknown harmony. With this range, “reconciliation” might be nothing more than the slow ferment of resentments in waiting, or nothing less than utopia. Thus, a key theoretical contribution of this study is to begin shaping the concept of *transformative* reconciliation by

applying the theory of transformative learning in a context of post-conflict reconciliation (i.e., Rwanda).

As articulated in this study, a tentative definition of transformative reconciliation shares many definitional features with transformative learning and proceeds along the same avenues of learning (somatic, affective, cognitive, spiritual), but refers to fundamental transformation in meaning perspectives in regards to human nature and the sources of conflict and violence -- and especially one's place in or involvement in the conflict. Examples of statements that reflect transformative reconciliation might include: experiences of the humanity of the other; reflections on the social construction of identities; or awareness that one might have done the same thing in the other's shoes. In contexts beyond Rwanda, expressions that capture the sense of transformative reconciliation might include Solzhenitsyn's (1973):

...the line separating good and evil passes not through states, not between classes, not between political parties either, but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts....and even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained; and even in the best of all hearts, there remains a small corner of evil.

Another expression of this type is Gene Hoffman's (1997): "An enemy is one whose story we have not heard."<sup>792</sup> Such expressions as these are uncommon, and seem to demand transformative experiences, such as Solzenhitzen's moment of being curled up on "rotting prison straw" and finally seeing the measure of who he was. In Rwanda, when a Tutsi is finally able to open to the possibility of Hutu suffering as deep as his own, and to view his own group as the cause of that suffering, he may begin to see himself as an unwitting "perpetrator," or others among his group as willing perpetrators, and ultimately to recognize that Rwandans are caught up in a narrative of their own making. Even more importantly, he may see that another narrative is entirely possible and is in fact within human capacity to create. More is discussed about the concept of transformative reconciliation in the section entitled, *Towards a Theory of Transformative Reconciliation*, below.

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<sup>792</sup> The Solzenhitsyn (1973) quote is from *Gulag Archipelago*, and Gene Hoffman's (1997) essay originally appeared in the journal of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Given the tentative concept of transformative reconciliation applied in this study, PCR and AEE appear to be quite effective at promoting it, albeit within a distinctively Christian paradigm. This conclusion is supported by the interviews and observational data, in which many participants expressed changes in their views of why and how the conflict had arisen; on the basic humanity of the other side; in how they viewed the “other” and the construction of ethnicity; and a much greater sense of purpose and dedication to healing Rwandans from a profound error in human consciousness.<sup>793</sup> I witnessed dramatic and humanizing shifts in interpersonal and inter-ethnic interactions between day one and day three of a retreat, and innumerable tears, embraces, sobs, and physically intimate encounters between people who appeared to strenuously avoid each other before the retreat. Participants expressed and displayed a renewed sense of hope and optimism; elation at realizing that reconciliation and forgiveness is actually possible between Hutu and Tutsi; and even a sense that their profound suffering serves the larger purpose of Rwandan reconciliation. For some, such changes were quite sudden, while for others they were more incremental, sometimes gained over many retreats. Of course it is possible that some of these expressions are adopted, perhaps due to the need to conform, to decrease scrutiny, to belong, or to increase access and influence. Rwanda today provides strong social and political incentives to *adopt* a stance of reconciliation, which was reflected in many references made by people *outside* AEE and PCR to teachings of church leaders, and government or non-governmental authorities. On a pragmatic level, many Rwandans recognize the need to live together again “as before”; or to put the past behind in a struggle for survival. The expressions of participants at PCR and AEE were distinctively different from pragmatic statements in their recognition of suffering on all sides; on the human nature of the conflict; and in their sense of agency in creating a different kind of future.

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<sup>793</sup> The Christian view would see the error as a separation from God (see Chapter Five), while a secularist might see the error as the faultiness of social construction and manipulation of identities in conflict. These views are not mutually exclusive.

The conclusions of this study in regards to transformational reconciliation at Gahaya Links are less dramatic, but no less meaningful. Gahaya Links operated in a completely different manner -- it did not generally guide members' engagement with each other in the ways PCR and AEE did, even though frictions were clearly present when women first joined. But because new members could invite two or three of their own friends (and so on), a blending of women across several lines of division was continually assured. Women within the cooperatives first recognized their interdependence in fulfilling orders for baskets, and over time they began to see that they could rely on each other for community or familial problems. Where many of them were previously "overlooked" because of poverty, trauma, or losing their husbands, they started to view themselves differently as women after joining Gahaya Links. They started to realize they can be contributing members of their community, important people worthy of respect, and equal partners in their home. Gahaya also provides important training and bonding experiences when it invites women into Kigali for weeks at a time, further opening opportunities for engagement with the "other," and occasionally addressing the profound emotional and psychological challenges faced by many of its members. In the interviews at Gahaya, there were many expressions of transformative learning (as described previously) but very few expressions of transformative reconciliation. However, this does not mean that the women weavers of Gahaya Links are not undergoing transformative reconciliation, but that these transformations may be more subtle over time, more linked to enlargement of their sense of esteem for themselves as women in a context where some of them have been badly abused. If transformative reconciliation is a process and not an endpoint, their expressions of cohesion and self-respect as women may reflect foundational work in coming to terms with the social construction of divisions. Although none of their stories of reconciliation appeared to break open the dichotomy of Tutsi victims and Hutu perpetrators, their establishment of common ground -- quite literally on the mats with each other day after day -- may be displaying a deeper recognition of socially constructed dichotomies than an interview could ever show. Their work on that common ground to transform their communities may in the end be the more powerful

force, which is argued at more length in the discussion of implications of the study.

Lastly, in the case of Duhozanye, I did not log a single occurrence of what this study puts forth as *transformative* reconciliation. Although every study participant expressed having reconciled, none of them seemed to have reached a different understanding about ethnicity or identity, or spoke of engaging on a profound empathetic level with a Hutu.<sup>794</sup> When asked how it feels to be around the killers of their husbands and children, they most often said they “live as before,” or that they “keep silent,” or that they “don’t have a choice; they are everywhere we go.” When asked about their experiences of reconciliation, the strikingly common expression was, “What can I do about it?” There was a poignant pragmatism to some of their decisions to reach out to the perpetrators first, to let them know they were amenable to reconciliation with them. Almost every interviewee described reconciliation as something they had been taught or told to do by government or church leaders or by outside trainers. This kind of statement is consistent also with their understanding of the reasons for the killing: i.e., “they were told to kill, so it is not their fault.” Yet, those who were asked whether they would trust their children with the killers who they had forgiven immediately said, “*Oya!* (No!)”<sup>795</sup> The president of Duhozanye recognized the importance of healing wounds so that peace could grow between them, and indeed expressed great interest in transcending the “dirty” thoughts that had occupied Rwandan minds for too long, but also stressed the continual lack of Hutu understanding and empathy for Tutsi suffering.

Such relatively disempowered expressions of reconciliation should not be surprising, given the harassment these women face; as widows, as *gacaca* witnesses, and especially as women who were raped.<sup>796</sup> As at least one leader of every organization in this study said to me,

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<sup>794</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Five, Duhozanye did include Hutu widows of Tutsi husbands and children, and did recognize their profound suffering, but these women were viewed as much “widows of the genocide” as other members.

<sup>795</sup> In the event that it is not clear here, no argument is being made that they *should* forgive and/or reconcile, or that somehow the women of Duhozanye have failed to go far enough. It is only that this kind of reconciliation appears to be relatively disempowered.

<sup>796</sup> As described in Chapter Two, rape survivors have faced derision from all sides, including Tutsi returnees from exile, who have accused them of being “accomplices” (*ibiyitso*, as pre-genocide RPF supporters were called).

the kinds of rapes that occurred during the Rwandan genocide are very difficult to forgive. They were not simply killing; they were torture, humiliation, and degradation to the extreme. Often the only reason the women survived was to make them suffer even more.<sup>797</sup> Their physical, social, and emotional challenges continue, even more so because it is very uncommon for one of the rapists to admit what they did. This reality supports one of the propositions of this work (and indeed the premise of AEE's "standing in the gap"), that unless one feels one's own wounds are acknowledged, it is very difficult to consider the wounds of the other. Without mutual empathy, it is more difficult for a suffering person to engage (cognitively, somatically, spiritually, or affectively) with the social construction of identities, the suffering on all sides, and their collective capacity to transform the conflict. In short, despite the evidence of transformative *learning* at Duhozanye, reconciliation there appears to be more about pragmatic choices than about transformation. The quality of reconciliation at Duhozanye does not appear to be due to any kind of programmatic reluctance, but to serious problems posed by the context itself.

### Reflection on Study Propositions

A number of propositions guided this study from the very beginning, some even before the research questions and research approach had been developed; these were nagging questions about what can meaningfully be called reconciliation. Other propositions arose during extensive review of the literatures in reconciliation and transformative learning. As discussed in Chapter Three, the concept of transformative learning is well developed, while that of reconciliation is considerably less so. Within the reconciliation literature, the terms "transformative" and "reconciliation" frequently appear together, but without conceptual development of their relationship to each other. This warranted an exploration into what *transformative reconciliation* might be, which further shaped the set of propositions. Finally, some propositions were more

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<sup>797</sup> The Human Rights Watch (1996) publication, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence in the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath* and the African Rights publication (Jefremovas, 1994) entitled *Rwanda: Death, Defiance, and Despair*, relate many accounts of rapists saying they would leave the women to die of sorrow and/or AIDS, or that they were "dead already."

consciously recognized and developed through the fieldwork phase of this study. To clarify all prepositions and their origins in one place, Table 7.1 provides each of the seven central propositions of the study in the first column, and the source of that proposition in the second column.

**Table 7.1: Origins of Seven Core Propositions of Study**

<b>Proposition</b>	<b>Origin of Proposition</b>
1. TL involves affective, somatic, cognitive, and spiritual avenues to varying degrees, based on internal and external factors.	Literature on TL
2. TL can occur even where critical discourse is lacking.	Literature on TL
3. Empowerment may be spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, or political.	Literature on TL; Fieldwork
4. Empowerment may not be a gain in control or autonomy, but rather a surrender of control.	Fieldwork
5. TL can be negative, or adaptive but narrowed.	Fieldwork
6. Multiple forms of reconciliation exist; not all are transformative and not all are positive.	GAPS in Reconciliation Literature; Fieldwork
7. Empathy for self and other, with empowerment (spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, or political) assists transformative reconciliation (“attending to past AND future”)	Merge of Literatures; Fieldwork

Note: “TL” refers to transformative learning.

In Table 7.1, one begins to see how propositions 1-6 contribute to the most important proposition of the study: “Empathy for self *and* other, *with* empowerment (spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, or political) assists transformative reconciliation.” This proposition brings together the parts of transformative learning theory and the gaps in reconciliation theory to suggest that “attending to the past” and “attending to the future” is crucial to *transformative reconciliation*.

To make it easier to view how the research questions of the study and the seven propositions shape the theory of transformative reconciliation, Table 7.2 shows how each



proposition is located within the literature *and* within the purposes of the study as defined by the research questions. In the left most column are aspects of the three research questions, including “types of learning,” “role of critical discourse,” “empathy,” “empowerment,” and “outcome of learning.” The middle two columns show the literature bases for transformative learning theory (TL) and reconciliation theory (Rec). The right most column shows the developing theory of transformative reconciliation (TRec). Each of the seven core propositions is in **bold**. Other statements are provided to show the way in which TRec theory is derived from established concepts in the literatures (shown in plain type) and from *gaps* in the reconciliation literature (shown in *italics*). As you move from left to right on the table, propositions of the study and concepts from the relevant literature are merged together to result in corresponding concepts in TRec theory.

So, for example, taking the bottom most set of propositions in Table 7.2, the widely held assumption that “transformative learning leads to more inclusive, emotionally open frames of reference” is called into question by the suspected but under researched position (Taylor, 2007) that “transformative learning can be negative, or adaptive but narrowed” (in **bold** as the fifth central proposition of the study). Mirroring the positive/negative frame in TL theory, proposition six (also in **bold**) states that, “multiple forms of reconciliation exist; not all are transformative and not all are positive.” Transformative reconciliation, it is then suggested, is a distinct kind of reconciliation: “Transformative reconciliation refers to perspective transformation in regards to human nature, sources of conflict/ violence, identities, and/or one’s place in the conflict.”

**Table 7.2: Propositions Guiding Study**

<b>Dimension/Research Questions</b>	<b>Transformative Learning (TL)</b>	<b>Reconciliation (Rec)</b>	<b>Transformative Reconciliation (TRec)</b>
Types of Learning (RQ 2)	<b>1. Involves affective, somatic, cognitive, and spiritual avenues to varying degrees, based on internal and external factors</b>		<b>1. Involves affective, somatic, cognitive, and spiritual avenues to varying degrees, based on internal and external factors</b>
Role of critical discourse/ dialogue (RQ 2)	Critical discourse important/ essential in TL  <b>BUT</b> <b>2. TL can occur even where critical discourse is lacking</b>	Dialogue with the “other” supports reconciliation  <b>AND</b> Social/ political denial of wounds impedes reconciliation	Dialogue with the “other” supports TRec  <b>AND</b> Social/ political denial of wounds impedes TRec  <b>BUT</b> <b>2. TRec can occur even where critical discourse is lacking.</b>
Empathy (RQ 2, 3)	Empathy supports TL	Empathetic engagement with the “other” supports Rec	Empathetic engagement with self <b>AND</b> “other” supports TRec
Empowerment (RQ 2, 3)	Empowerment is process and outcome of TL  <b>BUT</b> <b>3. Empowerment may be spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, or political</b> <b>AND</b> <b>4. Empowerment may not be a gain in control or autonomy, but rather a surrender of control</b>	<i>Empowerment supports Rec</i>	<b>AND</b> Empowerment supports TRec  <b>THEREFORE</b> <b>7. Empathy for self AND other, WITH empowerment (spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, or political) assists transformative reconciliation (“attending to past and future”)</b>
Outcome of Learning (RQ 2, 3)	TL leads to more inclusive, emotionally open frames of reference  <b>BUT</b> <b>5. TL can be negative, or adaptive but narrowed.</b>	<b>6. Multiple forms of reconciliation exist; not all are transformative and not all are positive.</b>	TRec refers to perspective transformation in regards to human nature, sources of conflict/violence, identities, and one’s place within conflict.

Table 7.2 Notes:

- All **bold** statements are core propositions of the study. All statements in *italics* are gaps in the literature. All plain typed statements are supported in the relevant literature.
- TL refers to transformative learning. TRec refers to transformative reconciliation, and Rec refers to reconciliation.

### *Proposition One*

The first proposition (appearing under both TL theory and TRec theory in Table 7.2), states that TL/ TRec “involves affective, somatic, cognitive and spiritual avenues, to varying degrees, depending on internal and external factors.” This proposition is an abbreviated way of saying that (1) TL and TRec can proceed through any combination of these avenues, and need not involve any one in particular, and (2) the combination is influenced by interior (i.e., located in the individual) and exterior (i.e. located in the context) factors. Regarding (1), the organizations of this study (AEE and PCR in particular) provide well-structured opportunities for learning along somatic, spiritual, and affective avenues, and to a notably lesser extent the cognitive avenue. Certainly Bible study and discussion, and teachings on the burdens of unforgiveness involve cognitive capacities, and cognition is quite likely involved in reflection upon the other ways of learning, as Merriam (2004) argues.<sup>1</sup> However, these retreats are intentionally designed to avoid lectures, models, and analyses on the roots of the conflict, social construction of identities, or any other similar topic. Meanwhile, Gahaya Links and Duhozanye provide varying degrees of structured learning along somatic, affective, and cognitive avenues, but no structured learning along the spiritual avenue. Yet, TL appears to proceed in all four organizations to some degree, and TRec appears to proceed at least two, and perhaps three, of the four, as discussed previously. So it seems reasonable to suggest that part (1) of this proposition is well supported by the data in this study. Part (2) is perhaps more important, because it is intended to suggest that if external and/ or internal factors impede learning along one or more avenues, it is still possible to proceed along other avenue(s). For example, if the Rwandan

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<sup>1</sup> As Merriam (2004) argues, even if cognition is not initially involved in the TL process, it appears to be mobilized in reflective periods during or after the event that precipitates learning.

political context limits learning along the cognitive avenue by discouraging critical discourse, it may in effect “squeeze” learning into the other avenues. In other words, a program or a learner might in a conscious or unconscious way “seek” an alternative avenue, where many TL theorists appear to assume that in the absence of cognitive engagement (i.e., critical reflection and discourse), TL won’t or can’t proceed. Such an assumption is a weakness in the application of TL theory to the African context, where cognition isn’t reified to the same degree as it is in the West.

### *Proposition Two*

The second proposition (also appearing under both TL and TRec in Table 7.2) is an extension of Proposition One, and is meant to provide further credence to a growing critique in TL theory, namely that TL/ TRec “can occur even where ‘critical discourse’ is lacking.” None of the four organizations in this study engaged in what would normally be called “critical discourse” in transformational learning theory. Program participants may have been accessing critical discourse elsewhere, but it would likely be quite limited because of the political climate. Whether or not critical discourse (via the cognitive avenue) would have been employed in the absence of political suppression is also unclear. After all, PCR in particular avoided models, lectures, and discussions because the founders felt such inputs would not meet the needs (somatic, affective, and spiritual) of the population. In any case, TL and TRec appear to occur in most of these organizations (as argued above), apparently through spiritual, affective, and somatic avenues with potential cognitive involvement in reflection on learning (Merriam, 2004).

### *Proposition Three*

The third proposition, appearing under the TL theory column of Table 7.1, reads, “Empowerment may be spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, and/or political.” It appears from the data analyzed in Chapters Five and Six that there is good support for the idea that “empowerment” as it is usually construed in TL theory is not only about gaining economic or

political power. The statements made by participants in all four organizations to varying degrees reflected gains in other kinds of power, such as self-esteem (e.g. moving from “being overlooked” to “having some oil for my skin,” at Gahaya Links) or a spiritual sense of higher purpose in one’s life (e.g., “God saved me for a reason – I am His ambassador on earth!” at PCR). However, without longitudinal data, it is impossible to know whether or not these changes are lasting.<sup>2</sup> If the external context begins to constrict a participant’s opportunities to act on this empowerment, it is possible that TL may only lead to more frustration (and ultimately disillusionment), as Duveskog and Friis-Hansen (2009) showed in regards to Farmer Field Schools in Kenya.

#### *Proposition Four*

The fourth proposition, appearing under the TL theory column of Table 7.2, reads, “Empowerment may not be a gain in control or autonomy, but rather a *surrender* of control.” This proposition arose from initial observations of programs in Rwanda, and was intended to call into question the Western (white male) bias in TL theory that views perspective transformation as a developmental step towards enhanced autonomy, control over one’s life, and/ or independence (Mezirow, 1981; 1990).<sup>3</sup> This study suggests that surrender to a higher power and/or enhanced *interdependence* with others should also be viewed as powerful and authentic results of TL and TRec. There are a number of reasons for further development of this construct.

First, the way in which participants of this study displayed and reflected on the process I have named “surrender” appears to be inextricably and paradoxically linked with a felt sense of empowerment. At the same moment a woman speaks of realizing God’s great purpose for her, she is also reflecting on the tininess of her will in the face of His. Just as a wounded genocide

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<sup>2</sup> As mentioned previously, some interviews at PCR and AEE were with people who had attended retreat(s) on other occasions, while Duhozanye and Gahaya Links members had ongoing (rather than one-time) involvement(s) with their respective program. Nevertheless, this study did not operationalize this data to treat it in a longitudinal manner.

<sup>3</sup> Mezirow (1981, p. 20) states that the goal of transformational learning is to “gain a crucial sense of agency over ourselves and our lives.” In other words, we learn to “control our experiences rather than be controlled by them” (Mezirow 1990, p. 375).

survivor finally surrenders his burden to Jesus, he also feels a profound sense of purpose and aliveness. And, while reconciling with the frailty of the human condition and the darkness of human nature is a critical part of the transformative process in this context, reconnection with the human community is also the hallmark of it. Thus, transformational learning may entail surrender or “letting go” of control and self-importance, while also engendering a sense of peace that one is taken care of, connected, loved, and/or important in the grander scheme of things – whatever that may be.

Second, such surrender need not always be associated with spiritual or religious experience, although it may be so in the majority of cases. A Rwandan seeking meaning where he is incapable of making it otherwise is likely to seek it in the best available place given the context of his upbringing, which is so often a familiar or new Christian church.<sup>4</sup> Yet, some Rwandans have turned away from religion altogether, either articulating a secular view on the events or in some cases a sense that the meaning of genocide is not comprehensible to the human mind or heart.<sup>5</sup> Whether arrived at cognitively, affectively, or somatically, a non-spiritual surrender of the need to make or know the meaning of genocide may be a very real, if rare, outcome of transformational learning. However, if one assumes, as Merriam & Caffarella (2007); Mezirow (1978a); Daloz (1986); Kegan (1982); and other TL theorists do, that meaning making is a fundamental human need, surrendering meaning altogether without embracing a higher power may not be sustainable for many.

Third, a stance of spiritual/ religious surrender may be adopted for social, political, or emotional reasons. Some may conform in order to belong, to gain status in a highly religious context, or to find respite from feelings of desolation. Adopted expressions of surrender may also serve as intermediate points on a difficult spiritual journey. For example, as shown in Chapter Five, some Tutsi study participants described their decision to find salvation in Jesus as

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<sup>4</sup> The search for meaning after genocide is also recognized by evangelicals (e.g., Rouner, 2002), although from a very different ontological and epistemological position.

<sup>5</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009).

being driven initially by the sense that the Hutu were finding salvation and leaving them behind in their sorrow. These statements could be viewed as contrived in the short term, but they may also support a longer process of profound surrender, as they did for several of those Tutsi study participants. And even with fully authentic spiritual/religious surrender, there is an element of pragmatism to letting go of anger and claims for justice, and this too involves a transformation of perspective. When one comes to see that divisions between people are always manipulated by others for political gain, and that this is a human issue, one can participate in that knowledge rather than being a passive recipient of it.

Fourth, surrender may have particular significance in a post-genocide context, where so many have lost absolutely everything of importance to them. As John Mutamba reflected in Chapter Two, “someone who has almost nothing left is so humbled, and forgiveness requires humility. That is the example of Jesus. Forgiveness goes with being disempowered. The more powerful people are, the less they forgive. Justice is what they want!”<sup>6</sup> In this expression can be seen that tension between humility and disempowerment on the one hand, and forgiveness and freedom on the other.

In short, this study certainly suggests revising the concept of perspective transformation, and especially the concept of empowerment, to include at the very least a transitory state of surrender, and potentially an enduring state of surrender, among those utilizing the spiritual avenue of learning in particular.

#### *Proposition Five*

The fifth proposition, appearing under the TL column of Table 7.2, states that transformational learning “can be negative, or adaptive but narrowed.” This possibility has rarely been discussed in the TL literature (Taylor, 2007) and one of the few studies on this topic (Naughton and Schied, 2010) refers to the perspective transformation that occurred among Hutu

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<sup>6</sup> Data from interview on October, 18, 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda.

perpetrators of genocide. Yet it is also possible for negative transformations to be non-violent and adaptive, and the Rwandan genocide seems to have provided plenty of evidence for this potentiality. A very powerful reflection of this phenomenon can be found in French journalist Jean Hatzfeld's (2007) book entitled *The Strategy of Antelopes: Living in Rwanda after the Genocide*. The title refers to the way in which hunted Tutsi came to view themselves as animals during the genocide, and some continue (even prefer) to view life in this way more than a decade later. For example, Claudine responds to Hatzfeld's question about how calmly she now meets the evil looks of the killers in the following way:

Yes, this calm is real. I have lovely children, a decently fertile field, a nice husband to help me along. A few years ago, after the killings, when you met me for the first time, I was a simple girl among scattered children, bereft of everything but drudgery and bad thoughts. And since then, this husband has turned me into a family lady in an unbelievable way. Courage tugs me by the hand every morning, even when I awaken from terrible dreams, or during the dry season. Life offers me its smiles, and I owe it my gratitude for not having abandoned me in the marshes. But for me, the chance to become someone is over. You will never hear answers from the real Claudine in response to your questions – because I'm no longer truly happy in my own skin. I've known the defilement of a bestial existence, I've witnessed the ferocity of the hyena and even worse – since animals are never that wicked. I was called a cockroach, as you know. I was raped by a savage creature. I was swept away to that place, out there, which no words of ours can ever match. But the worst walks on ahead of me. My heart will always look around suspiciously; I know so well now that destiny can break its simple promises....when I was a girl, I placed my trust in life with all my heart. Life betrayed me. To be betrayed by your neighbors, by the authorities, by the Whites – that is a staggering blow.....to be betrayed by life, who can bear that? It's too much. You lose all sense of where the right direction lies. Reason why, in the future, I will always stay one step to the side. (Hatzfeld, 2007, p. 6-7)

It would be both arrogant and naïve to call this perspective undeveloped or un-transformed.

After all, Claudine has seen what lies underneath, and the vast majority of readers of this work have not. Many Tutsi survivors (including those in Hatzfeld's three excellent books on Rwanda) express that only a genocide survivor can even come close to understanding their perspective and indeed that they do not even try to tell non-survivors their story.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> However, many survivors do in fact tell (some version of) their stories readily, often as the very first part of their first conversation with outsiders.



Examining closely Mezirow's (2003a, p. 3) description of perspective transformation, i.e., calling into question our "taken for granted frames of reference...to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally able to change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action," Claudine's statement matches that description in some ways, but with a distinctively different feel. Her new perspective is arguably more "discriminating," and her opinions and beliefs may "prove more true or justified to guide action," although probably not in the sense that TL theorists would predict. Reflection does not appear to be lacking. Whether her perspective is more "inclusive, open" or "emotionally able to change" is a matter of interpretation, if including the bestiality in human nature is seen as "more true."<sup>8</sup> Claudine, for all her poetic self-expression, is not an exception in Rwanda. The case of Rwanda provides ample evidence that the theory of transformative learning needs to make more room for transformations that go beyond a romanticized view of transformed lives as more empowered, socially active, and imbued with meaning and life mission. In much the same way that McDonald (1999) showed how ethical vegans are confronting an as yet unbending socially constructed illusion (i.e., "speciesism"), the perspective transformation of a person like Claudine shows us that there may be other such commonly-held illusions about human nature. Transformative learning theory should be able to go beyond the romanticized view and tackle the unpleasant and unwelcome truths about who and what we are.

### *Proposition Six*

The sixth proposition, appearing under the reconciliation column of Table 7.2, was one of the justifications for this study and reads: "Multiple forms of reconciliation exist; not all are transformative and not all are positive." Throughout the literature review process and the fieldwork phases of this study, I continually heard distinctly different expressions of

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<sup>8</sup> There may be an urge to put such "negative" outcomes in the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) category, but this does not appear to be accurate with some genocide victims who hold a very plain view on life and are not overcome by PTSD symptoms.

reconciliation, such that the very term “reconciliation” cannot possibly contain all of them. At times these different shades of meaning appeared to vary from lesser to greater empowerment. For example, I would perceive a contrast between a woman from Duhozanye saying, “What can I do about it? We have to live together” and a woman from Gahaya Links saying, “We come to realize we are all, Hutu and Tutsi, having the same problems, and we can come to each other and get support for those problems.” At other times in this study, shades of meaning appeared to vary in the degree of re-humanization of the other. For example, there is a difference between one man declaring “God will take care of punishing the evil deeds of the Hutu,” vs. another saying, “If I had been raised to hate like that, I too might have taken up the machete.” These shades of meaning await better conceptual development than was possible alongside the other demands of this study, but it seems clear that the reconciliation literature needs far better development of its central construct.

#### *Proposition Seven*

The seventh proposition, appearing under the TRec column of Table 7.2, reads: “Empathy for self *and* other, *with* empowerment (spiritual, affective, socioeconomic, and/or political) assists transformative reconciliation (attending to the past and future).” This is the most complex of propositions for this study, as it incorporates several critical components. Although there is no indication that these critical components must proceed in any particular order, they are presented here in the order in which they are stated.<sup>9</sup>

First, “attending to the past” means empathy for both self and other in dealing with the pain of what has transpired in the past. There is significant evidence from this study and others (e.g., Govier, 2009) that when a person’s pain is heard and/or acknowledged, he or she is more able to engage with the pain of the “other.” Rarely mentioned is how difficult it can be to express such pain to the other when they are seen as the direct cause of it. To do so in the case of ethnic violence requires an enormous amount of vulnerability -- and the assumption that the

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, Gahaya Links assumes that empowerment is the driver of reconciliation.

other is human enough to have empathy. As some of the data from this study showed, engaging in a mutual process of empathy with the “other” can be a profoundly transformative experience in and of itself.

Second, “attending to the future” is empowerment on any of many levels.

Socioeconomic empowerment can give a person the belief that life will be better, that she is able to send her children to school bathed and clothed, that she won’t be “overlooked” by others, and that she is respected in her family and community. Socioeconomic empowerment was shown powerfully in the testimonies of the women from Gahaya Links. Political empowerment can give a person a sense that he has power to advance, to influence others, and to be well-regarded as a leader. Political empowerment was shown in interviews across the organizations, but most notably in the case of the Duhozanye widow who became a parliamentarian. Lastly, and crucial in this study, is spiritual empowerment. Although often co-mingled with socioeconomic or political power, spiritual empowerment is distinct. It gives a person the sense that life has meaning, that her own life has purpose, that she is connected with God and with others in a profound and inexplicable way that can be trusted and *surrendered to*. It is intertwined with her cultural background (as Tolliver & Tisdell [2003] have argued), but is often expressed as being beyond culture, race, nationality, or (importantly) religion. While in this context spiritual empowerment is most often associated with Christianity, it is not inherently Christian, or even religious.

This study provides compelling evidence that when mutual empathy and empowerment are integrated into a programmatic approach to reconciliation; they are more likely to lead to transformative learning *and* transformative reconciliation. This appears to be so when mutual empathy is structured (as with PCR and AEE) but potentially also when it is less structured (as with Gahaya Links). Where empathy is not mutual and empowerment is constrained by social and economic factors (as with Duhozanye), reconciliation appeared to be less transformative. These findings support Proposition Seven, yet because no program employing only one approach and not the other could be found; it is unclear how findings might differ with only one approach.

Furthermore, it is not at all essential that mutual empathy and/or empowerment occur in a programmatic context, either together or apart. For example, a Rwandan colleague outside this study underwent a perspective transformation about ethnicity simply by being in the United States and realizing that the entire idea that Hutu were inherently less intelligent or more inclined to evil was, in a word, “stupid.” All it took was for him to see that somewhere else in the world, Hutu and Tutsi didn’t matter, that people from all over the world could go to the same University and achieve similar levels of success.<sup>10</sup> Also outside any sort of programmatic context, Immaculee Ilibagiza, author of *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amongst the Rwandan Holocaust* (2007) underwent what this study would identify as transformative reconciliation while still hiding from the killers during the genocide.

#### Discussion of Post-Conflict Reconciliation in Rwandan Context

This study set out to answer a set of research questions within multiple organizations in Rwanda purporting to do reconciliation work, and thus to expand our understanding of reconciliation processes in Rwanda and other post-conflict environments. The degree to which these organizations created transformative experiences (in learning and/or in reconciliation) was explored at length above, in order to gain a beginning sense of what supports transformative reconciliation and what impedes it. Also explored above were the guiding propositions of the study, which were designed to narrow data analysis to several key features of an emerging theory of transformative reconciliation. The following section describes several important conclusions about post-conflict reconciliation in Rwanda. It includes the differential experiences and contributions of women in reconciliation; the cultural, political, and pedagogical factors that make Christian-based models of reconciliation particularly salient in Rwanda; and the potential of localized grassroots efforts at reconciliation, as contrasted to the top-down approaches favored in most post-conflict reconciliation efforts.

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<sup>10</sup> Whether or not this colleague has undergone transformative *reconciliation* was not explored.

## *Gender and Reconciliation*

The foregoing conclusions about transformative learning and/or reconciliation in the two women's organizations, and close examination of the evidence in regards to the seven propositions of this study, suggest that it is extremely important to consider the role of gender in reconciliation processes. The nature of modern violent conflict has become much more intra- than inter-state, and therefore more localized (Anderlini, 2007), thus imposing "massive miseries and hardships on women," but also "open[ing] up new opportunities for changing existing gender stratification" (Kumar, 2001, p. 25). Women's organizations have emerged as powerful new social actors in many modern post-conflict societies, including post-genocide Rwanda (Kumar, 2001). Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Two, the proliferation of women's organizations in Rwanda after the genocide is "nothing short of remarkable" (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001, p. 97). In Rwanda, the reasons for the proliferation of women's organizations include: the severe crisis that followed the genocide and the government's incapacity to address the multitude of problems; Rwanda's tradition of women's organizational activity (*foyaux sociaux*); support from the international community; and in particular the actions taken by the government to expand women's political and economic participation (Newbury & Baldwin, 2001b, p. 100). The latter is best exemplified by the Government of National Unity's (GNU) electoral quota system, which achieved a 48.8 % female Parliament in 2003 (Bauer, 2009), and a 56% female Parliament in 2008.<sup>11</sup> Although women had been active political forces in Rwanda before the genocide (Longman, 2006), the genocide created a "window" for a 70% female population to take initiative (Anderlini, 2007). Furthermore, as was confirmed by many participants in this particular study, Rwandans today generally trust women more than men in positions of leadership, due to the actions of the men during the genocide (Powley, 2004).

The level of trust that the Rwandan population has in its women provides an opportunity not only for their advancement but for their contributions to reconciliation. Anderlini (2007, p.

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<sup>11</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2008). However, as Bauer (2009, p. 21) points out, simple quotas are not enough when you don't have a "democratic dispensation." If all MPs are silenced, it doesn't really matter what their gender is.

178) highlights the Rwandan case in her study of women's contributions to peacemaking in conflict zones, emphasizing especially the efforts of local leaders at the grassroots, "with women at the helm."<sup>12</sup> Arguing for the "transformative nature of women's peace activism," Anderlini refers to women's ability to recognize that victims are on all sides, that the "killing must stop" and "life must prevail" (2007, p. 17). She notes that women often know much more about the events because men are disproportionately killed (as is the case in Rwanda), and that through a "feminine consciousness" are able to create empathetic opportunities for perpetrators to acknowledge their wrong-doing (2007, p. 175-176). As confirmed by this study, there are many stories of Rwandan women encouraging their men to confess, or victims encouraging perpetrators to seek reconciliation with them. As Anderlini (2007, p. 176) notes, "The fear of breaking down, crying in public, or showing emotion is stronger among men; for the environment to be conducive to forgiveness, empathy toward victims and perpetrators is essential." For many, having women also play this role may seem to place further burden on them, as say some critics of truth commissions in South Africa (e.g., Ross, 2003), who express concerns that women testify about the abuse of male loved ones rather than their own abuse. Anderlini (2007) suggests that these gestures may be better viewed as women exercising their own agency; to restore humanity to victims and perpetrators; to bring others into the process of reconciliation; to link people across lines who have suffered similarly; and to make it clear that perpetrators are also human.

Anderlini (2007) cautions, although perhaps not convincingly enough, against essentializing women, recognizing that many a female leader has contributed to war-making rather than peace-making. Setting aside the issue of whether a "feminine consciousness" or "ethic of care" (Noddings, 2003) has biological or cultural roots, the fact that women are often victims of the worst violence in the conflict also provides compelling reasons for their efforts at

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<sup>12</sup> Indeed Daphrose, the leader of Duhozanye, was one of 1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe in 2005, and represents the kind of "day to day" person recognized by the award. PeaceWomen Across the Globe is a network of 1000 women elected for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. See <http://www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/aktuell.php>, last accessed on January 11, 2011.

peace. In particular, the drastic rise in sexual violence in recent conflicts, which Anderlini and others argue is at root men humiliating other men, has made women's bodies the "frontlines and battlefields of many contemporary wars" (Anderlini, 2007, p. 30). Cockburn's (1998) study of women's organizations across three distinct conflict zones found that women in such organizations are able to make the connections between the oppression at the source of the conflict and the cross-cutting oppression of gender. As she states, "Homeland for women was never a peaceful space because violence has been enacted on them in times of 'peace'" (Cockburn, 1998, p. 8) -- awareness they only gained after suffering violence due to coerced identities.

In their fight to restore self-dignity and a "self beyond victimhood," many women focus their efforts on "challenging entrenched attitudes" and "building on social ties" (Anderlini, 2007, p. 12). Indeed, we saw this in the stories of the widows of Duhozanye, who fought fiercely for their dignity even when they wanted to die. They donned pants and built houses. They created new families for themselves with other widows and orphans under their care. They took on roles normally occupied by men and supported each other in doing so. And they focused on community needs and reconciliation in the best way they could. Their actions and their "fierceness" in doing so are a testimony to their endurance and resilience, and should be viewed as an important part of the recovery process for women in post-conflict societies that are unwilling or unable to address their distinct needs. When considering reconciliation for women in such circumstances, it may be critical to support their recovery efforts in such groups (within-group reconciliation, in a sense) before they can attempt transformative reconciliation outside the group. However, if empowerment and mutual empathy work together in the way suggested by Proposition Seven, it may be very difficult for women like those at Duhozanye to achieve transformative reconciliation without greater social acknowledgement of their suffering and affirmation of their value, especially on the local level in their day to day lives. Far from being simply a local or national issue, however, this is a global issue and strongly suggests a more gendered view on reconciliation efforts worldwide.

Looking more specifically at the importance of women's economic empowerment and reconciliation, the case of Gahaya Links presents a different set of considerations. The women of Gahaya are also experiencing reconciliation in a distinctly gendered way, although their day-to-day lives are far more heterogeneous than Duhozanye's in terms of gender, experience base, ethnicity, religion, and social status. Women at Gahaya are not so clearly identified as Hutu/Tutsi, rape victims, or widows, although on a local level, one has to suppose their status is known. Their economic needs bring most of them to the cooperative, and their skills as women weavers are initially the only reason for their belonging. Before long, they are making enough money to buy soap for children (their own or orphans) and to send them to school. They begin to support each other on problems other than weaving, such as alcoholism in the family or domestic violence. They are approached for loans and other assistance, previously the province of men. Over time, their economic success gains them esteem in their communities, so much so that they are chosen for leadership roles and asked for their views on community problems. Those community problems certainly include issues arising from the genocide and post-genocide reconciliation, providing an important avenue for them to influence reconciliation in Rwanda.

The gains in self-worth for women at Gahaya were dramatic, and deserve special attention here because they indicate changes in their sense of agency. The expressions that best captures this shift in self-worth were the dual phrases "before I was overlooked" but now "I can afford to have oil for my skin." This simple expression is very important, as in much of Africa "gleaming skin [is] seen to radiate beauty and status, [a]nd sensuous delight" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997, p. 224). In Rwanda, a good shine to the skin is commonly mentioned in expressions of a person looking "cool," healthy, and well off. That shine is achieved with lotions, creams, and most commonly Vaseline products.<sup>13</sup> Burke's research in southern Africa showed that many Africans do not feel clean without some sort of cream or lotion after washing,

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<sup>13</sup> In Rwanda, it is not uncommon to see even very young children dipping a fingertip into a Vaseline jar to smear it all over the head neck, lower arms and lower legs. In fact, my baggage has been broken into twice upon arrival at the Kigali airport, and both times it was the cheap bottles of skin cream that were stolen. When women make requests of me, they are often for lotions.



and that people use these products as often as they can afford (Burke, 1996, p. 172). Shininess can reflect class and status, or the sign of “modern bodies and manners” (Burke, 1996, p. 167).<sup>14</sup>

The linkage between shiny skin and self-worth was shown in both the verbal and non-verbal expressions of Gahaya members. Counter posed to their affect when they spoke of being “overlooked” and entirely dependent on their families and therefore of low desirability for marriage, being able to purchase oil for their skin (rather than “beg” it of their father or husband) appeared to mark a key moment in their sense of self-worth as contributing members of society. Listening to their stories, it was clear that their greater self-esteem had increased their sense of social agency and importance, which they had begun to exercise on a local level. Although Gahaya Links is not directly involved in politics at the local level, there were indications Gahaya members were already becoming politically active at the local level. As Ndegwa (1996, p. 2) observes about non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kenya, “regardless of the organizational involvement of an NGO in transitional politics, a clear effect of NGO grassroots development work is to enable local communities to independently engage in political actions, with important implications for democratization.”

In summary, organizations such as Duhozanye appear to be essential recovery supports for women in post-conflict environments, as well as drivers of social change in attitudes about gender, governance, and reconciliation. They may also serve as possible stepping stones to transformative reconciliation if the social context validates their experience, affirms their value, and supports their empowerment. Organizations such as Gahaya Links serve a critical role in the socioeconomic and political empowerment of women, enhancing their influence on community life, bringing their voices to the forefront, and driving social change. Both types of organization

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<sup>14</sup> The practice of “smearing” fat and mud pastes on the skin was widespread in central and southern Africa as a protectant from dirt and cracking skin (Burke, 1996). In some places (including rural areas of Rwanda), animal lard, butter, or milk fat was often used for this purpose. However, as Burke (1996) observes about these practices in southern Africa, because of the stink and the “greasiness” of smeared skin, the “intense disapproval of missionaries and white authorities and the commodification of both rural and urban culture rapidly encouraged most individuals to purchase products to satisfy their needs rather than continue to make their own mud and fat pastes for smearing” (1996, p. 171).

shape reconciliation in important, and gendered, ways. To the extent that reconciliation and recovery efforts are initiated by international, regional and national players, much closer attention should be played to the role of women's organizations and their distinct approaches to reconciliation.

### *Politics, Culture and Pedagogy in Christian Reconciliation Programs*

As discussed previously, this study concludes that the Christian Reconciliation programs (PCR and AEE) promote transformative reconciliation in dramatic ways. However, the urge to universalize this conclusion and apply this model to other contexts should be resisted, for there are a number of factors working to the advantage of the Christian programs in Rwanda, including, political, cultural, and pedagogical factors.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Political Factors*

As was described in Chapter Two, religion has always played a powerful role in Rwandan political and socioeconomic life. First, the pre-colonial Rwandan state was led by a divine kingship, whereby the *mwami* and the ancestors mediated one's relationship to *imaana*. During the colonial era, the *mwami* was in a spiritual sense steadily replaced by the clergy of the Catholic Church, which made itself integral to every aspect of Rwandan life. The fact that the greatest massacres in 1994 were in the churches certainly calls into question how completely the *mwami* actually was replaced, and how good Church-state linkages of power are for Rwanda. Thus, it may be helpful to view the "mushrooming" of the "free" churches as a rejection of institutionalized church structures, as Van 't Spijker (1999) argues. The notion that one can have a direct and personal relationship with Jesus, rather than one mediated by the *mwami* or one's ancestors, or by the priests and prelates of the hierarchical churches, is in itself transformative for Rwanda. Yet, it is notable that such personal relationships with Jesus are also being encouraged

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<sup>15</sup> PCR does conduct retreats in several other East African countries, although this study had very little data on adaptation of the model to different contexts. AEE also conducts retreats in other parts of Africa, and from circulated materials does appear to adapt retreats for different social and political contexts, although not so far as to alter the fundamentally Christian approach.

*within* certain hierarchical churches. Furthermore, in present-day Rwanda, the churches appear to have been assigned the responsibility to “heal the heart of Rwanda” by the RPF-led government.

However, in stark contrast to the Hutu-led hierarchy of the pre-genocidal churches, the “new” churches as well as the more hierarchical churches (especially the Anglican Church) are very disproportionately led by Ugandan Tutsi (Cantrell, 2007; 2009). Key leaders in the Anglican Church who come from Uganda are Archbishop Kolini, and Bishop Rucyana, who are leading a global charge for conservative Christians opposed to homosexuality. Their establishment of the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMIA) provides them avenues of substantial funding from American conservatives, while also driving an evangelical revival in the US (Cantrell, 2007; 2009).<sup>16</sup> The leadership of Rwandan evangelicals in conservative Christianity has mobilized American evangelicals to support Rwanda, but these American evangelicals are for the most part very ignorant of the underlying dynamics of Rwandan politics (Cantrell, 2007; 2009). In fact, the American founders of PCR display this lack of understanding in their promotional materials, as shown in Chapter Five. Even more problematic for Rwandans is the effect of Ugandan Tutsi church leadership on the churches’ relationship with Kagame’s government. The Anglican Church in particular is very supportive of the RPF, and there is some evidence indicating that Kagame’s government has some influence in the promotion of Anglican Church leaders (Cantrell, 2009).<sup>17</sup> That many of the business, government, and non-government leaders of Rwanda today are also Ugandan Tutsi is viewed as a problem among Hutu and even many Tutsi survivors.<sup>18</sup>

And yet, PCR and AEE do not appear to conform entirely to the government’s version of history, as for example with its assertion of a peaceful pre-colonial history. It is hard to discern a

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<sup>16</sup> As of early 2009, Kolini headed an American jurisdiction of 144 congregations, and 45 new “works in progress” (Cantrell, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> As shown in Chapter Five, the Team Leader for AEE, Antoine Rutayisire, is now the Pastor in the Anglican Church and Subdean of the St Etienne Cathedral in Kigali.

<sup>18</sup> Data from multiple interviews and fieldnotes (2006-2009).

purely political motivation for these organizations to contradict the government on this matter, unless it is to appease Hutu needs for some acknowledgement of Tutsi oppression – enough to move the process along – without acknowledging the most important crimes. I did hear one mention of RPF atrocities (at AEE) but it was stated somewhat indirectly. And there were some other indirect indicators that some people at AEE hold a more complex view on the current political situation. It is not insignificant that Tutsi “stand in the gap” both individually and collectively at AEE, and individually at PCR. Whether these programs are in fact pushing the political debates as far as they can safely go, or are working with somewhat more cynical objectives is not clear from the data I collected.<sup>19</sup> However, having formed relationships with many of the people involved in these two organizations, I developed the impression that there were both extraordinarily sincere and committed Christians *and* politically motivated Christians in their midst. Many Christians reported being deeply troubled by the churches’ involvement in the genocide, and some were eager to “stand in the gap” to try to mend the damage wrought by many Christians on fellow Rwandans. The sincerity of many Rwandans’ desire to establish a broader identity (in Christ, in this case) should not be lost in any political discussion.

Whatever underlying motivations exist, the fact remains that very unusual statements are made at both PCR and AEE retreats. Sometimes facilitators pointed out who was Hutu and who was Tutsi and paired them up to talk. Almost all leaders talked about their hatred for the other group with specifics about why. Persons shared in intense small group activities their personal wounds that came from ethnic violence. And there were many other verbal and non-verbal expressions of *mutual* wounding. Whether or not these programs succeed in saying these things with the support of the government is not entirely clear, but *that* they say them certainly has an effect on the people at the retreat. They allow a certain degree of *mutuality* in empathetic engagement, which this study argues is critical to transformative reconciliation. Paired with a sense of spiritual empowerment to dedicate themselves to work in healing Rwanda, often in

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<sup>19</sup> I was not prepared to tackle this issue assertively, having no deeper connections within the church hierarchies in Rwanda. As it was, discerning patterns of church leadership and government involvement came late in the study.

dyads of Hutu and Tutsi, the two processes appear to make transformative reconciliation quite a bit more likely.<sup>20</sup>

### *Cultural Factors*

Also contributing to AEE and PCR's relative success in transformative reconciliation is the cultural relevance of certain practices, such as the Cross workshop (at AEE); the progression of the entire healing ceremony (at AEE and PCR); and the idea of "wounded healers" in need of healing before they can heal the nation. In the largest sense, it is helpful to look at how Central African cultural practices might address society-wide ruptures like genocide. When persons are afflicted with illness or unease throughout most of central and southern Africa, there is almost always "something else going on" (Janzen, 1992, p. 86), meaning that others (in kin, clan, or the broader society) are implicated in the affliction, and therefore also implicated in healing the affliction. It is important to remember that for much of Africa, the persons involved include ancestors, who can be benevolent or malevolent, and many rituals center around enlisting their help or placating their spirits (Janzen & Janzen, 2000). With afflictions, society itself can be the sufferer, whether that be social or economic upheaval, exploitation, oppression, class division, or (presumably) ethnic strife, thus giving rise to "cults of affliction" (*ngoma*), which are often oriented to the needs of marginalized groups. *Ngoma* is an institution rather than a particular ritual, as the rituals of *ngoma* vary widely (Janzen, 1992). The word *ngoma* means "drum" in most Bantu languages (including *Kinyarwanda*), but "doing *ngoma*" does not always involve a drum (Janzen, 1992). In some cases, thumping on another object (particularly the Bible) provides percussion through which the ancestors speak (Reis, 2000). In Rwanda the most notable example of *ngoma* is the *ryangombe* cult, which is still active despite the tendency of

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<sup>20</sup> However, such dyads are quite frequently Hutu perpetrators and Tutsi victims, which may serve to perpetuate that dichotomy.

many Rwandans to say it is no longer practiced (Janzen & Janzen, 2000; Mamdani, 2001; Taylor, C., 1999).<sup>21</sup>

Given the scope and breadth of the societal affliction today in Rwanda, and the number of ancestors that died violent deaths without proper ceremony and burial, it is perhaps surprising that these indigenous practices have not made a more forceful re-entry. As Janzen (1992) argues, highly centralized states tend to suppress cults of affliction, but then they exist on the margins of society to address the needs, most commonly, of the marginalized. Whether or not it is helpful to think of the “free” churches as “the margins” is unclear, but this study suggests that the free churches of Rwanda today may be sites for syncretic expressions of *ngoma*. *Ngoma* has been found to interpenetrate churches and mosques (Janzen, 1992), as with the “healing churches” of southern Africa (Jonker, 2000). More specifically, this study argues that the progression of activities at PCR and AEE are syncretic expressions of *ngoma*, as Janzen (1992) describes it. Certain “disparate elements of an individual’s life threads [are woven] into a meaningful fabric” in *ngoma*, through devices “of mutual ‘call and response’ sharing of experience, of self-presentation, of articulation of common affliction, and of consensus over the nature of the problem and the course of action to take,” (p. 110). Eventually the sufferer emerges as a healer and all celebrate in communal meals and dance in “apply[ing] tremendous energies to the reconstitution of the social whole that is assembled” (Janzen, 1992, p. 105).

Importantly, the “core feature [of *ngoma* is] the belief that misfortune, adversity, and affliction may be transformed into power and wholeness. There is a strong insistence in *ngoma* theorizing that singing, sacrifice, and communing turn life around and literally bring life out of death” (Janzen, 1992, p. 105). Bringing life out of death resembles the “ideology of the ‘wounded healer’” (Reis, 2000) that we heard in the powerful language by that term at PCR and AEE. Finally, “[t]he text of self-presentation is never completed, for as long as the *ngoma*

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<sup>21</sup> I have heard many Rwandans deny the ongoing practice of *ryangombe* and later admit it, as has Christopher Taylor, author of *Milk, honey and money; Changing concepts in Rwandan healing* (1992) and *Sacrifice as terror: The Rwandan genocide of 1994* (2001). Data from personal conversation, November 2010.

participant lives, there will be moments and times of self renewal, in the context of others” (Janzen, 1992, p. 110). We see this “self-renewal” in the return of PCR and AEE participants to multiple retreats, and their often repeated “testimonies” in their ongoing work to heal Rwanda.

Another potentially syncretic practice used at Christian retreats in Rwanda is the nailing of wounds to the cross, as with AEE. This study found two other Christian reconciliation programs that also employ this ritual, which may be due to close collaboration between the leaders of these organizations.<sup>22</sup> This is a “completely new” practice, according to Christopher Taylor, a well-known author on Rwandan healing practices.<sup>23</sup> Writing of the Munkukusa movement in the Kongo during the early 1950s, Janzen and MacGaffey (1974, p. 26) state:

[the movement,] to cleanse villages of witchcraft, used a procedure which included many features of *nkondi*; the continuity is striking. The Children of the owning clan of the village brought back mud from the cemetery to place on the altar of the local church, subsequently dumping it into a cruciform trench, the "cross of Jesus," dug outside the building. A person declaring his innocence of witchcraft knelt before a second cross made of wood, swore an oath, and drove a nail into the cross: (in KiKongo) “If I have returned to witchcraft, may the nail strike!”

However, this practice had not advanced very far eastward across Kongo by the 1950s, and is unlikely to have pushed all the way to Rwanda unless, as Taylor wonders, the exodus of “biblical proportions” out of Rwanda in 1994 brought Hutu fleeing the RPF into contact with these practices in the DRC.<sup>24</sup>

There is insufficient evidence from this study to establish to what extent the rituals in the PCR and AEE should be viewed as syncretic, although pairing the need for healing in a culturally meaningful fashion with the reassertion of one’s Christian faith (especially in the face of the failure of the Christian churches to steer a moral course through the genocide) appears to

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<sup>22</sup> The two organizations I know of that also use this ceremony are CARSA and LeRucher. Leaders of AEE’s reconciliation ministry have gone on to work for both of those organizations (data from fieldnotes, 2006-2009).

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview, November, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Personal interview, November, 2010. In fact, many Rwandan Hutu did make it that far across the DRC, although whether and how they would have brought this practice back is unknown. Furthermore, as Janzen and MacGaffey (1974) are quick to point out, many practices entailing the hammering of nails arose with the advent of iron. They caution against interpretations akin to “the tail wagging the dog” (p. 27).

be a powerful combination. Although leaders at PCR and AEE did not appear to acknowledge the deeper relevance of these practices, that does not diminish their importance to the participants of the retreats. For a Rwandan trying to make meaning of such extreme experiences, being able to mobilize both their Christian faith and traditional practices in that endeavor is supportive of the process of healing, and therefore reconciliation, even if they are unaware of pre-colonial practice.

### *Pedagogical Factors*

Finally, the pedagogy of both PCR and AEE retreats is very personalized, experiential, and relatively empowering in terms of dynamics between facilitators and participants. This pedagogy may be partially due to the influence of Westerners in designing both retreat formats. Even when the retreats are handed over to Rwandans (more the case with AEE than PCR), many of the Rwandans are returnees from Uganda or non-returnees who have been educated in English-based educational systems, which are seen in Rwanda as less lecture-based.<sup>25</sup> On this matter, Steward (2009), the only other Rwanda author I know who has written about AEE retreats, states:

Workshops allow participants to face personal experiences rather than denying them, confronting personal fears while also teaching participants to value their emotions and to reflect on their meaning. This is a slow process of education and awareness-raising. This, in part, provides some of the inspiration to envisage a better future, imagining a peaceful Rwanda in which citizens speak the truth and communicate openly and respectfully (p. 187)

In summary, due to their ability to provide political spaces for participants to discuss ethnicity and wounds on all sides, the cultural relevance of their retreat models, their pedagogical approach, *and* their combination of mutual empathy with empowerment, PCR and AEE are able to draw on a number of supporting factors in promoting what this study argues is transformative reconciliation.

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<sup>25</sup> Data from fieldnotes (2006-2009).



### *Grassroots vs. Top-Down Reconciliation Programming*

The reconciliation programming described and analyzed in this study is somewhat atypical within the relatively new field of post-conflict reconciliation (found within the larger field of transitional justice). Reconciliation programs in Rwanda are numerous and frequently started at the grassroots rather than through top-down governmental structures. They exist alongside sizable top-down structures such as the *gacaca* and the multiple activities of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), yet in the case of the religious groups especially have been charged with “healing the heart of Rwanda.”<sup>26</sup> It is hard to discern the effects of the four reconciliation programs apart from the large national programs because both the reconciliation programs and the *gacaca* are highly localized forums for reconciliation. However, the case of Rwanda provides compelling reasons to look more closely at the importance of *local* grassroots reconciliation processes.

As Anderlini (2007) observes, peacebuilding in its many forms, including post-conflict reconciliation, has become increasingly local and personal while at the same time it has also become more global (as with international advocacy networks, international institutions, and so on). This shift in location of peacebuilding activity is arguably because *conflict* has become increasingly local, as intrastate and inter-communal conflicts are on the rise. Because few nations can possibly prosecute even a small percentage of perpetrators, “even victims are often willing to live with impunity for their attackers, either for fear of reprisals or because they believe that trials would jeopardize the fragile peace” (Anderlini, 2007, p. 182). Such fears are true of Rwanda, as was shown in the case of Duhozanye in particular, and yet, unlike many other conflicts of a similar nature, Rwanda *has* been able to prosecute a large number of perpetrators through the *gacaca*, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the National

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<sup>26</sup> There are many criticisms of the *gacaca* as a form of victor’s justice (Sebarenzi, 2010); for being procedurally flawed (Schabas, 2002); and for being counterproductive and retraumatizing to many victims (Brouneus, 2008). Yet, every Rwandan is required to go to a local *gacaca* every week (although the *gacaca* is now limited to appeals) and the *gacaca* itself is often mentioned by study participants in regards to views on reconciliation.

Courts. Thus, some semblance of justice is important in reconciliation, but Rwandans also need, and have sought, more than the court-based justice to enable them to reconcile.<sup>27</sup>

It may be that reconciliation dictated by a central government is particularly insufficient in the case of violence between neighbors, family members, and other close relations. Small scale reconciliation -- close, intimate, personal encounters between persons or small groups of people -- may be the only transformative reconciliation achievable in such settings. Some scholars and practitioners have recognized this simple reality. For example, Wolpe et al (2004) observes that changing institutions won't work if the mindsets of leaders have not been changed. And Miall's (2004) theory of conflict transformation recognizes a fifth and last level at which reconciliation proceeds, where a "personal change of heart or mind among individuals leaders or small groups creates a willingness to soften positions or make conciliatory gestures at key moments." Yet, most efforts and most funding actually go to the much larger national or international processes.<sup>28</sup>

In summary, although there is much that is unknown about linkages between individual and societal level reconciliation, particularly in a politically constricted climate like Rwanda's, the changing nature of violent conflict to increasingly local and personal forms necessitates a reorientation of reconciliation scholarship and activity to local grassroots processes. The cases of this study have shown that such processes are often very effective, and that persons who undergo them almost always dedicate themselves to bringing reconciliation to more people. Given the variety of experiences the participants of different programs had gone through,

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<sup>27</sup> However, it is important to note that the government and non-governmental groups (e.g., the umbrella women's organization, *Twese Hamwe/Profemmes*) have provided various incentives for organizations to pursue reconciliation work (Anderlini, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Many scholars and practitioners, particularly in political science and law, focus on top-down processes of reconciliation (e.g., Amstutz, 2005; Du Toit, 2009). Certain key scholars/practitioners focus on the middle levels of sociopolitical organization (particularly Lederach, 1997; 2001), and a rather large group of scholar/practitioners, especially from psychology, is focused on interpersonal and/or intergroup processes (e.g. Govier, 2009; Worthington, 2006; Luskin, 2001; Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992; and many others). And a growing body of scholarship has argued for the importance of indigenous reconciliation processes (e.g. Quinn, 2009b; Zartman, 2000; Irani, 2004; Shaw, 2005; and others). Taking the field as a whole, there is bulk at the top and bulk at the bottom, but very little in the middle. Furthermore, linkages between individual and societal reconciliation are very insufficiently studied (Quinn, 2009a).

reconciliation processes appear to be highly idiosyncratic, as Burnet (2005) also notes. Supporting local efforts at reconciliation allows programs to meet much more complex sets of needs in the population than can be addressed through a centralized mechanism.<sup>29</sup>

### Theory Building

This study drew on a well-established body of theory (transformative learning) to develop the conceptual basis of a nascent body of literature (reconciliation), and to begin to develop the theory of transformative reconciliation. This section reflects on what transformative learning theory actually contributed to this study, and which areas still need development. It then considers how this study has shaped the developing theory of transformative reconciliation.

#### *Contributions of Transformational Learning Theory*

Transformational learning theory contributed several concepts that were helpful in distinguishing between what might be called transformative reconciliation and what might simply be called “reconciliation” in its many forms. These include the concept of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1978a; 1978b) and the underlying structures and process of transforming them. The concept of the disorienting dilemma and the later addition of the catalytic event (Courtenay et al, 1998) provided a frame through which to view the extreme violence in Rwanda, and the initiation of the central process of meaning making days, months, or even years later. Critical reflection, perspective taking, and discourse speak to important cognitive engagements within the process of transformational learning, although it is just as important to pay attention to affective, somatic, and spiritual engagements. Kegan’s (2000) insistence that transformational learning be more than just profound change in “what one knows” but also in “how one knows” was helpful in distinguishing between transformative and non-

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<sup>29</sup> For example, an issue of utmost concern in Rwanda is the lack of reconciliation programming for the Hutu majority. Other than the *gacaca* (at which many Hutu are held to account for the genocide) and the *ingando* camps (which are claimed by the government to be for their “re-education”), there is quite literally no programming that responds to specifically Hutu needs. Such programs would likely run afoul of laws on divisionism (data from interview with NURC commissioner, January 2009).

transformative learning, but was less consistently helpful in distinguishing between reconciliation and transformative reconciliation.<sup>30</sup> Western pedagogical approaches such as experience-based learning, empowerment, and orientation towards personal transformation were, despite their shortcomings in an African setting, useful in understanding the ways in which the four organizations educated and supported their members, and in the role economic empowerment played in transformative reconciliation. Some transformational learning theorists (e.g. Tisdell and Tolliver, 2003) have stressed the importance of spirituality and culture in the process of TL, and this study justified continuing stress on those factors. The importance of empathy in supporting transformative processes was also well reflected in the findings of this study, as was the Stone Center's contribution of mutual empathy (Jordan, 2001; Jordan, Walker, & Hartling, 2004). Finally, the fact that every person in this study who appeared to have undergone transformative reconciliation expressed that his life had dramatically changed and that the purpose of his life was now healing Rwanda, supported life mission as a powerful outcome of transformative learning. The areas in which transformative learning theory deserves further development include:

- exploration of extreme disorienting dilemmas (such as rape and genocide)
- the inclusion of negative or adaptive but narrowed perspective transformations
- greater attention to somatic, affective and spiritual avenues of learning
- more realistic views on discourse and action as adapted to context
- inquiry into perspective transformations as both surrender and empowerment

### *Towards a Theory of Transformative Reconciliation*

The key theoretical contribution of this study is to begin shaping the concept of transformative reconciliation by applying the theory of transformative learning in a context of post-conflict reconciliation (i.e., Rwanda). As articulated previously in this chapter, a tentative definition of transformative reconciliation shares many definitional features with transformative

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<sup>30</sup> For example, surrendering to a higher power (as epistemological change) should be seen as TRec, but widening the circle of one's concern to include the "other" may or may not entail epistemological change.

learning and proceeds along the same avenues of learning (somatic, affective, cognitive, spiritual), but refers to fundamental transformation in meaning perspectives about human nature and the sources of conflict and violence; and especially one's place in or involvement in the conflict. As such, transformative reconciliation occurs on the level of the individual, often within social settings, but not in national or international negotiations apart from the individuals participating in those negotiations. Transformative reconciliation might also use relatively little cognition, as this study suggests.<sup>31</sup> Rituals such as those employed by AEE and PCR can help people "overcome painful legacies from the past through transformative reconciliation rituals....such rituals readjust individuals and communities to changing aspects of their life-worlds, thereby enabling them to complete difficult and troubling transitions as individuals and members of society" (King-Irani, 1999, as cited in Irani, 1999 p. 14).<sup>32</sup> Transformative reconciliation may never be articulated in verbal form. It may be experienced and expressed through tears, feelings of somatic release, or the electrifying touch of an "enemy."<sup>33</sup> Many expressions may only represent points on the path of transformative reconciliation, as with Mezirow's stages of perspective transformation, which may be recursive but never lead back to previous meaning structures (1978a). In fact, there may be no endpoint to transformative reconciliation, as some have argued there is no endpoint to transformative learning. The transformative reconciliation mindset may become a habit of mind (Kegan, 1994), as with a person who recognizes a lifelong journey of embracing ever-widening circles of self and other. It is likely to be identified as spiritual in nature, as with transformational learning, but is not necessarily so. There may be a give-and-take relationship of surrender and empowerment as

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<sup>31</sup> Considering the relationships between cognitive, affective, spiritual, and somatic avenues is beyond the scope of this study. However, it does seem that drawing distinctions between them says more about what we don't know than about what we do.

<sup>32</sup> King-Irani (1999) is referring to the rituals of *sulh* and *musalaha*, utilized in Islamic healing. In fact, King-Irani is one of the few scholars who refer to "transformative reconciliation" as a term, although it is not conceptually developed.

<sup>33</sup> For a narrative description of the power of touch in relationship with an "enemy," see Gobodo-Madikizela (2003).

identified in the examples of transformational reconciliation in this study, but this too is unknown.

Transformative reconciliation need not only apply to inter-communal or inter-personal conflict such as we've seen in this study; it could apply to conflicts or confusion in the intrapersonal or cosmological realms as well. For example, many in Rwanda express losing faith in God, or having to reconcile with God. Likewise, transformative reconciliation need not only apply to inter-human conflict. For example, when a person comes to recognize the profound suffering of production animals, and her own participation in a system that in every way possible obscures and minimizes the sentience of animals, she sees the multiple human narratives around human superiority in entirely new ways.<sup>34</sup> Actually seeing and feeling the experience of other sentient beings can also be viewed as transformative reconciliation in that it entails a transformation that brings a person into a more open, inclusive and respectful relationship with other beings, one in which she more fully recognizes her role in her relationship with them.

In summary, transformative reconciliation is a form of perspective transformation having to do with meaning perspectives regarding human nature and consciousness, and especially in regards to conflict and violence; personal identities; and one's place within conflict. Although this discussion only addresses a beginning exploration of the concept of transformative reconciliation, it should be useful in helping scholars and practitioners in reconciliation work to recognize this particular kind of reconciliation, its value in leadership for peace, what can be done to support the process of transformative reconciliation, and what kinds of factors impede the process.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> McDonald (1999) considers the vegan perspective in a "speciesist" world. Possible narratives around human superiority are: religiously established human dominion over the earth; scientific "proofs" of abilities possessed by humans but not animals (some of which have been definitively debunked); the myth of "objectivity" and human detachment; the reification of rationality over instinct; denial of sentience among smaller order beings; and so on. In short, in place of admitting we are incapable of knowing what animals think/feel/sense, we declare them inferior to us in every way (not unlike the way Whites viewed Africans less than 100 years ago).

<sup>35</sup> The question remains as to whether transformative reconciliation is always a desirable outcome, as with contexts where perspective transformations lead to disillusionment, for example the Field Farmer Schools in Duveskog & Friis-Hansen (2009). It may be more important in some settings (Duhozanye perhaps) to encourage the regaining of

## Recommendations for Reconciliation Programming

Arising from the conclusions and discussion of the study discussed in this chapter is the following set of recommendations for programming in post-conflict reconciliation. Each recommendation includes a description of its relevance to this study and beyond.

### *Derive from Locally Articulated Needs and Resources*

On the whole, all four programs in this study were very localized in their leadership, their membership, and their activities. They were led by Rwandans, operated harmoniously but independently of the government, and responded to the often extreme needs of specific local populations as they arose.<sup>36</sup> Although it may be advisable to standardize or centrally administrate *some* reconciliation programming in *some* post-conflict environments, in Rwanda the localization of reconciliation processes appears to greatly assist multiple communities in meeting complex needs that the government is incapable of or unwilling to address. Furthermore, out of these local efforts arises a leadership base that is especially committed to peace, and which is increasingly female. Therefore, in complex post-conflict settings, locally derived and led reconciliation programs may be more responsive and effective in meeting the needs of the population, and should be supported.

### *Integrate Local, Regional, and National Efforts at Reconciliation*

Most post-conflict reconciliation funding supports national processes, while local processes are most often run through small-scale NGOs, many of them Western. Furthermore, efforts to promote peacebuilding at the critical middle levels are few, as Lederach (1997) argues. Continuity and coherence between the various levels should be sought wherever possible.

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human dignity and social justice, thus in a sense choosing a “cold anger” (Rogers, 1990) approach rather than a reconciliatory approach.

<sup>36</sup> PCR is a bit of an exception in that it had significant outside design inputs (the Rouners), attempted to blend groups of people from all over the country to achieve maximum reach, and in general did not engage in activities outside the healing and reconciliation retreats.

Indeed, Rwanda appears to be a relatively strong case for integration at several levels of sociopolitical organization, from the grassroots women's programs, to regional and national initiatives. While this study argues that messages at the national level in Rwanda actually impede transformative reconciliation for many (e.g. Hutu), the way in which the local programs work within the political climate and still create some opportunity for mutual empathetic experience is perhaps Rwanda's best hope.<sup>37</sup>

### *Create Small Intimate Communities of Learning*

All four organizations in this study operated at the level of groups of ten to twenty persons, even where the organization itself had thousands of members or beneficiaries. The creation of trusting, intimate, and emotionally and politically safe communities where participants were able to develop a deep sense of belonging appears to have been critical to positive and transformative learning. Focusing more attention on such small groups may appear to have limited reach, but in fact just the four organizations in this study had reached well over 100,000 Rwandans, a sizable number in a place like Rwanda. If intimate experiences of reconciliation shape the lives of people who go on to work for reconciliation more broadly (as this study shows), such a strategy should be approached alongside larger initiatives.

### *Blend Mutual Empathy with Empowerment*

A central argument of this study was that blending *mutually* empathetic experiences with empowering experiences (whether economic, social, political, and/or spiritual) is more likely to facilitate transformative reconciliation because it allows people to both "attend to the past" and "attend to the future." For empathetic engagement to be truly mutual requires accountability and therefore acknowledgement of wounding on all sides. As Hamber & Kelly (2009) showed in their study of people in Northern Ireland, and Govier (2009) argues compellingly,

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<sup>37</sup> This study is skeptical about long-term reconciliation in Rwanda because of the government's denial of its own wrong-doing, which makes it extremely difficult for Hutu to feel their wounds have been acknowledged. It isn't necessary to debate equivalences between large-scale genocide by the Hutu and war-related atrocities by the Tutsi; it is only necessary to acknowledge and account for the latter, as with the former.



acknowledgment is crucial in reconciliation. Just as the women of Duhozanye struggle to reconcile when the Hutu deny, rationalize, or refuse to understand how much Tutsi have suffered, so too do Hutu struggle to reconcile when crimes against them are denied locally, nationally, and internationally. There is no need for crimes to be equal in breadth or scope. There is only the human need to have one's pain acknowledged. Lacking mutual empathy, reconciliation may not be transformative or sustainable.

In this study, PCR and AEE most assertively created occasions for mutually empathetic engagement, although ideally they would go quite a bit further if the political context created space for further engagement with Hutu suffering. To the degree that specific contexts allow mutually empathetic engagements and empowering outcomes, blending of the two pathways should be pursued.

#### *Utilize Multiple Avenues of Learning*

Political circumstances may limit certain pathways of learning, as with the constriction of critical discourse (cognitive) in Rwanda or the anti-religious stance (spiritual) of Marxist societies (e.g., the previous atheist state of Communist Albania). Social and psychological needs might also limit the effectiveness of certain avenues of learning, as with feelings of overwhelm due to programmatic overreliance on affective processes. Some learners are more likely to use certain pathways than others, and all learners are likely to vary pathways of learning in different times and circumstances. Furthermore, attentiveness to non-Western ways of knowing and learning are critical in *all* contexts. There are no clear lines between Western and non-Western knowing and learning (Merriam & Associates, 2007), and indeed there is no true "Western" way of knowing and learning (Caffarella & Daffron, in progress). Learning that is sensitive to the differential experiences of participants is especially important in a post-conflict reconciliation program, where learners come with experiences that have profoundly shaped their identities. Developing approaches that utilize all avenues of learning in complementary ways and making

room for individual experiences (as PCR and AEE did) allows more participants to benefit, and likely also creates more sustainable learning.

### *Utilize Culturally Appropriate Approaches*

As the discussion about the Christian religious groups showed, culturally appropriate activities, rituals, and pedagogical strategies are more likely to have powerful and lasting impacts because they are grounded in culturally relevant pedagogy. In Rwanda, the importance of Bible study and spiritual learning is far higher than it is in many other post-conflict environments, and the ways in which Rwandan cosmology and Christianity intersect are peculiar to the setting. Therefore, transplanting the PCR or AEE approach elsewhere is unlikely to be effective without significant refinement. Furthermore, in Rwanda the reconciliation programs were integrated with larger societal structures (district and national leadership, other non-profits, other churches, and so on). As in much of Africa, a focus on associations with local authorities and leaders is more likely to be effective, and such collaborative approaches to programs enhance cultural practices, according to Gboku & Lekoko (2007, p. 11). Working together with domestic structures allows programs to be more socially acceptable and therefore responsive to community needs.

### *Increase Emphasis on Gender and Reconciliation*

As argued previously, women have different needs after conflict and experience reconciliation in a gendered way. Their powerful contributions to peacemaking efforts have been acknowledged by a growing number of studies. Responding to women's needs more effectively and clearing more avenues for them to contribute to peacebuilding will clearly enhance the possibility of sustainable peace. Yet there is widespread and endemic resistance to women's power, and especially to acknowledging the destructiveness of sexual oppression and violence. Accountability for sexual violence on local and global levels must dramatically increase if women's contributions to peace are to be realized. Possible mechanisms specific to

Rwanda might be centralized educational media campaigns to change attitudes towards rape victims and children of rape or a truth commission on gender. Elevating widows and rape victims to a status akin to the “wounded healers” of the churches would be both an accurate statement and a significant boost to women’s esteem. Such mechanisms would provide much-needed acknowledgement of the injustices against women, while also affirming their value in Rwanda’s future.

### *Pay Close Attention to Power and Context*

Cervero and Wilson (1999) argue that any program is operating within “socially organized relations of power [which] define both the possibilities for action as well as the meaning of the learning for all stakeholders” (p. 34). These organized relations of power exist within organizations and with other entities outside of them, and therefore cannot be avoided. Program planners have a “two-fold purpose”: to use power relations to enhance effectiveness, but to also challenge the status quo in regards to knowledge and power within the society (Caffarella, 2002). We can see from the four organizations in this study that they were all in very favorable relations with the government while also operating independently from it. As shown in Chapter Two, the government of Rwanda has considerably narrowed space for civil society organizations to criticize or even question the government on its leadership. Taking a critical stance against the government would quite likely lead to program closure.<sup>38</sup> Although program planners may be challenged to find ethical ways to work with existing power structures, closed programs serve nobody.

Finding ways to access marginalized populations in ways that do not overtly threaten power structures may require adaptation of program objectives to allow inclusivity in circumspect ways. For example, the organization I eliminated due to limited access (*Mbwira Ndumva*) drew Hutu women in by working on the issues of AIDS and poverty, but works

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<sup>38</sup> The two Christian programs do contradict the government’s stance in a few small but important areas. To some extent, because the programs use so little critical discourse, the transformations that do occur may fly somewhat “below the radar” of governmental scrutiny.

indirectly with them on reconciliation. It is clear that the “planning table” (Cervero & Wilson, 1991) for reconciliation in Rwanda has very little space for Hutu. Those Hutu at the table, who actively work for reconciliation, tend to stay within a narrow definition of Hutu experience (i.e. their shame as perpetrators, or the theft of their houses or goods by Tutsis from exile). Women are gaining more space at the table, while the Twa are absent altogether. Tutsi survivors do not have much space at the table, but Tutsi returnees from Uganda do; this division is the reason for the exile of Tutsi survivor leaders, such as Sebarenzi (Burnet, 2005; Sebarenzi, 2009). Many of the leaders in the government, in the churches, and in non-governmental organizations are Ugandan Tutsi. Finding plenty of space at the planning table are the Christian churches and leaders (especially in the evangelical and Anglican churches), who have been entrusted to “heal the heart of Rwanda” in collaboration with their American evangelical counterparts.<sup>39</sup> And in an amazing turn of events, conservative anti-homosexuality Christians from Rwanda (e.g., Archbishop Kolini) are at the planning table in American Christian revivalism.

### *Consider Transfer of Learning*

Reconciliation programming that does not in some manner build in transfer of learning is not likely to lead to sustained results, especially as learners often face resistance to new learning when they return to their home settings (Caffarella, 2002). Individuals may have profound changes, but if the context remains the same, it is very difficult to sustain the change. Considerable time, energy, and money are wasted on programs that do not plan for transference (Cervero, Wilson, and Associates, 2001). Mechanisms for transfer of learning from the reconciliation programs in this study were further follow up retreats (as with AEE) or a culture of repeat participation of retreats (AEE and PCR), and integration of the program’s activity into many aspects of one’s life (as with Duhozanye and Gahaya Links). In all these cases, having a community of learners in which one’s transformation is recognized and supported is critical,

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<sup>39</sup> For example, conservative evangelist Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in the US is on President Kagame’s Advisory Council.

especially in a context which may present extremely unsupportive reactions to learning. Therefore, planning for transfer-of-learning should be built into any program planning process in reconciliation.

### Summary

This study explored transformational learning and post-conflict reconciliation in four organizations in Rwanda: two of them Christian reconciliation programs and two of them women's support programs. Of the latter two, one was for women survivors of the genocide while the other was for women weavers. All organizations articulated different approaches to reconciliation and shaped notably different experiences for their participants and members.

The transformative learning literature from adult education and the reconciliation literature (from many fields) were merged in an effort to develop a theory of *transformative reconciliation* by analyzing the experiences within the four organizations. Many types of post-conflict reconciliation exist, from a simple living side by side without violence to a profound change in how former enemies view themselves and their part in the conflict. Transformative learning theory was very beneficial in drawing the distinctions between multiple kinds of reconciliation observed in the study. The two Christian programs appeared to be very effective at promoting transformative reconciliation, while the women's empowerment program was less dramatic but potentially more powerful over the long run. The fourth program for widows and survivors of the genocide appeared to be quite effective in transformative *learning* but was limited by contextual factors in promoting transformative reconciliation.

The key theoretical contribution of this study was to offer the concept of transformative reconciliation by applying the theory of transformative learning to a context of post-conflict reconciliation. While transformative learning theory has been used to interpret learning in a few cases of societal rupture or violence (e.g., Parera et al, 2003; King, 2003), it has never been used to view post-genocide reconciliation. Transformative reconciliation is distinct from many other types of reconciliation in that it refers to fundamental transformation in meaning perspectives

regarding human nature and the sources of conflict and violence. Through transformative reconciliation, a person is finally able to open to the possibility of the “other” suffering as deeply as he has, and potentially to view his own group as the cause of that suffering. He may begin to see that they are both caught up in a narrative of their own making. Even more importantly, he may see that another narrative is entirely possible and is in fact within human capacity to create.

Certainly this kind of reconciliation is not unfamiliar to reconciliation scholars and practitioners. It is in fact what the best reconciliation programs are attempting to promote. What this study does is to make this kind of reconciliation distinct by linking it with transformational learning theory and providing qualitative evidence of its significance. Furthermore, by linking reconciliation with transformative learning theory, the conceptual framework of transformative learning can be brought to bear in understanding *how* and *why* this particular form of reconciliation occurs.

At the same time, transformative learning theory can be strengthened by this study. This extensive work provides insight into the weakness in transformative learning theory in the following ways:

1. This study provides evidence that transformative learning theory should consider transformations that cause adaptive but narrowed (or even negative) perspectives.
2. This study provides further evidence that *transformation* is not always a rational process, but rather proceeds through affect, soma, and spiritual ways of learning, or any combination of these.
3. This study provides further support for the argument that transformations may not entail critical discourse, especially in contexts where social action is considerably internalized or constrained, as is the case in Rwanda.
4. This study strongly suggests that context brings meaning to the experiences of participants in all four programs, and that therefore transformative learning cannot be viewed apart from culture and power (Clark & Wilson, 1991).
5. This study provides evidence to support the notion of transformative learning as greater interconnectedness with others and *surrender* to what is beyond one’s control, rather than greater independence and control (the Western male ideal).

6. Finally, this study is one of only a few studies that apply transformative learning theory to non-Western cultures. It suggests transformative learning theory does provide a useful lens to view learning in non-Western contexts, but that context should be taken into consideration in interpreting results.

This study also made a number of recommendations for post-conflict reconciliation programming in Rwanda and beyond. While recommending that efforts be derived from locally identified needs, it also cautions against applying the Christian approaches used in Rwanda to other settings without very deliberate consideration of political and cultural context. The importance of integrating efforts at local, regional, national, and international levels was emphasized, but programming that creates small intimate communities of learning are important to the deeper processes at work. By blending empowerment and mutual empathy pathways and utilizing multiple avenues of learning, programs can effect more transformative change. There should in all contexts be very close attention paid to culture and political context. At the same time, emphasizing participation of all genders brings the resources of any community more fully into processes of transformative reconciliation.

## APPENDIX A

Table A.1 summarizes in very simplified form the key periods in recent Rwandan history (1890-2008). It intentionally simplifies political positions at both ends of the spectrum in order to emphasize deeply contradictory and mutually exclusive stories about Rwandan history and identity. This work has argued that there is much more going on than the Hutu Tutsi divide in Rwanda, but because political debate does center on ethnicity, that dimension is shown here.

**Table A.1: Hutu-Tutsi Extremes in Political Debates**

<b>Historical Period</b>	<b>Hutu View</b>	<b>Tutsi View</b>
Pre-colonial	Feudal oppression by the Tutsi Court	Peaceful co-existence and social cohesion led by the “noble court”
Colonial	Oppression by the “Hamite” Tutsi	Oppression by the Whites
1958-1962	Hutu Revolution	Genocide of the Tutsi
1962-1990	Indigenous rule by Hutu (Tutsi foreigners)	Oppression and genocide of the Tutsi
1990-1994	Return of the monarchy to oppress Hutu	Justified “war of return”
1994 “genocide”	War against invaders and internal traitors	Genocide of the Tutsi
1994-1996	The “second genocide” in Rwanda and DRC	Legitimate need for security, occasional personal excess
1996-2008	Oppression of the Hutu	A “new Rwanda” where there is no Hutu or Tutsi



## APPENDIX B

### The Ten Commandments of the Hutu *“Appel a la conscience des Bahutu”* Kangura 6 (December 1990)

1. Every Hutu must know that a Tutsi woman, wherever she is, works for her Tutsi ethnic group. Therefore, any Hutu who weds a Tutsi woman, who makes of a Tutsi woman his secretary or his protégée is a traitor.
2. Every Hutu must know that our Hutu daughters are more worthy and more aware of their roles as women, spouses, and mothers. Are they not prettier, good secretaries, and more honest?
3. Hutu women, be vigilant, and bring your husbands, sons, and brothers to reason.
4. Every Hutu must know that every Tutsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is to enhance the supremacy of his ethnic group. Therefore, every Hutu is a traitor:
  - who makes an alliance with Tutsi in his business;
  - who invests his money or state money in the enterprise of a Tutsi;
  - who grants Tutsi favors in business (granting of import licenses, bank loans, plots for building, or public markets).
5. Strategic positions – political, administrative, economic, military, and security – must be entrusted to Hutu.
6. The sector of education (students and teachers) must have a majority of Hutu.
7. The Rwandan Armed Forces must be exclusively Hutu. The experience of October 1990 is a lesson for us. No member of the military may marry a Tutsi woman.
8. The Hutu must stop feeling any pity for the Tutsi.
9. Hutu, whoever they are, must be united with, in solidarity with, and preoccupied with their Hutu brothers.
  - Hutu inside and outside Rwanda must constantly seek friends and allies for the Hutu cause, beginning with their Bantu brothers.
  - They must counter Tutsi propaganda. Hutu must be firm and vigilant against their common enemy.
10. The 1959 social revolution, the 1961 referendum, and Hutu ideology must be taught to every Hutu at all levels.
  - Every Hutu must widely disseminate this ideology.
  - Any Hutu who persecutes his Hutu brother for having read, spread, and taught this ideology is a traitor.

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