**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**
**A.M.E.C.E.A**

**FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**
**DEPARTMENT OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY**

# HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING PROCESS AMONG THE PERPETRATORS AND SURVIVORS OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI IN RWANDA

**With reference to Butare Diocese**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology with Specialization in Spiritual Theology**

**BY**
**JEAN PIERRE BAKURIREHE**
**REG. NO: 1043077**

**MAY, 2026**
**NAIROBI-KENYA**

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**1st Supervisors: Rev. Dr. Reginald Fabian Temu**

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**MAY, 2026**

**NAIROBI-KENYA**

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, achieved through personal reading, analyzing, research and reflection with assistance of qualified supervisors. It has never been submitted to any institution of leaning for academic qualification. All information from sources has been duly acknowledged.

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Signature _____ Date 13-5-2026

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Benedictine Monks of Gihindamuyaga Monastery, whose prayerful witness, spiritual guidance, and unwavering commitment to monastic life have inspired a deeper understanding of reconciliation, peace, and devotion

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of this dissertation has been made possible first and foremost by the grace of God, whose love, guidance, and providence have accompanied me throughout my studies. I am deeply grateful for His constant presence, strength, and inspiration during this journey.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to my community of Benedictine Monks at Gihindamuyaga Monastery, whose unwavering support in prayer, spiritual guidance, and financial assistance has sustained me throughout this academic endeavor. Their example of dedication, faith, and generosity has been a source of inspiration and motivation.

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I would like to thank the Commission of Justice and Peace in Butare Diocese for their cooperation and support during my research. I am also grateful to the priests of the Department of Spiritual Theology for their advice, encouragement, and pastoral insights that enriched my study.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to all my friends and well-wishers whose support, prayers, and encouragement have accompanied me on this journey. Though I cannot mention each by name, your contributions have been invaluable, and I pray that God blesses you abundantly.

## ABREVIATIONS

### Biblical abbreviations

Acts : Acts

Chr : Chronicles

Cor : Corinthians

Dt : Deuteronomy

Ex : Exodus

Gal : Galatians

Gen : Genesis

Is : Isaiah

Jer : Jeremiah

Jn : John

Kgs : Kings

Lk : Luke

Mat : Matthew

Mk : Mark

Prv : Proverbs

Ps : Psalms

**General abbreviations**

AM : *Africae Munus*

ATR : African Tradition Religion

CCC : Catechism of the Catholic Church

CCRM : Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

CDR : Coalition pour la Défense de la République

EA : *Ecclesia in Africa*

FAR : Forces Armées Rwandaises

GS : *Gaudium et Spes*

ICTR : International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

MRND : Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement

NURC : National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

RPF : Rwandan Patriotic Front

SECAM : Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar

SNJG : Service National des Juridictions Gacaca

TANU : Tanganyika African National Union

TIG : Travaux d'Intérêt Général

UDHR : Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNAMIR : United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

UR : *Unitatis Redintegratio*

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the holistic spirituality of reconciliation and healing among perpetrators and survivors of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, with particular reference to Butare Diocese. The genocide caused profound moral, social, and spiritual disruption, leaving survivors traumatized and perpetrators burdened by guilt and social exclusion. Addressing these wounds requires more than legal or political interventions; it demands a comprehensive, multidimensional approach that integrates theological, psychological, philosophical, and cultural insights. The study examines how the Catholic Church, through its theological tradition, pastoral initiatives, and sacramental life, contributes to fostering reconciliation and holistic healing. Drawing from Sacred Scripture, the teaching of Church Fathers, and Magisterial teachings, the research highlights reconciliation as both a divine initiative and a human responsibility. Healing is understood as a process that restores relationships with God, self, and others, emphasizing forgiveness, truth-telling, acknowledgment of wrongdoing, and communal restoration.

The research also engages interdisciplinary perspectives, incorporating philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Philosophical reflections illustrate reconciliation as a transformative process, integrating conflict into unity. Psychological insights emphasize trauma recovery, empathy, and post-traumatic growth. Anthropological and cultural perspectives reveal the role of indigenous practices, reconciliation villages, and communal rituals in rebuilding trust and social cohesion.

Empirical findings from Butare Diocese demonstrate how survivors and perpetrators participate in faith-based programs, communal prayer, confession, and dialogue, which collectively foster spiritual renewal, moral transformation, and social reintegration. Legal and governmental mechanisms, such as the Gacaca courts and reconciliation initiatives, are complemented by Church-led pastoral care, highlighting the synergy between justice, faith, and culture.

The study concludes that reconciliation is an ongoing pilgrimage that requires patience, grace, and human cooperation. Healing touches every dimension of the human person body, mind, and spirit—and is most effective when integrated into a holistic spirituality. By situating theology in lived experience, this research presents a model for pastoral practice that promotes enduring peace, justice, and communal wholeness in post-genocide Rwanda, offering insights relevant to other contexts marked by conflict and trauma.

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda represents one of the most profound human tragedies of the twentieth century, leaving deep scars on individuals, families, and communities. Over one million people were killed, countless others were physically and psychologically wounded, and the social fabric of the nation was torn apart. In the aftermath, Rwanda faced not only the monumental task of administering justice but also the equally pressing challenge of fostering reconciliation and healing among survivors and perpetrators. The holistic spirituality of reconciliation and healing, particularly within the Catholic Church and local communities such as Butare Diocese, emerges as a central avenue for addressing these multidimensional wounds.

Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda is both a personal and communal journey that draws upon a rich tapestry of philosophical, psychological, theological, and cultural resources. Philosophical insights underscore reconciliation as a transformative process, integrating conflict and fostering unity. Psychological approaches emphasize trauma recovery, empathy, forgiveness, and post-traumatic growth, highlighting the interplay between emotional healing and social cohesion. Anthropological and cultural perspectives reveal the significance of local traditions, rituals, and communal practices, including reconciliation villages and indigenous ceremonies, which create spaces for dialogue, trust-building, and collective restoration.

Religious and theological dimensions further deepen this process. The Scripture and Church tradition present reconciliation as a divine initiative that restores relationships with God and among people. From the Old Testament's emphasis on justice, repentance, and covenantal restoration to the New Testament's witness to forgiveness and healing through Christ, the theological foundations of reconciliation illuminate pathways for spiritual and social renewal.

The teachings of Church Fathers and Magisterial documents emphasize the Church's mission to cultivate peace, justice, and holistic healing.

Within Butare Diocese, these principles are lived through pastoral initiatives, community-based programs, sacramental participation, and faith-based dialogue. Survivors and perpetrators engage in truth-telling, confession, communal prayer, and shared activities, fostering mutual understanding and spiritual renewal. The integration of justice, cultural practice, and Christian spirituality illustrates that reconciliation is not a single event but an ongoing process of transformation involving mind, body, and spirit.

This dissertation explores the holistic spirituality of reconciliation and healing in Rwanda, with particular reference to Butare Diocese. It examines how theological, cultural, and psychological insights converge in practice to restore broken relationships, foster forgiveness, and build a reconciled society. By situating reconciliation at the intersection of faith, culture, and human experience, the study highlights the Church's vital role in guiding Rwanda toward enduring peace, justice, and communal wholeness.

**Formative event**

The time I was assigned in Rugango Parish as Parish Priest in 2016, the first Small Christian Community I visited, had a leader who was accused of being one of the genocide perpetrators released from the prison and the secretary was a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. I was told that these two persons were always in conflict, and as a result, there was a division among the members of this small Christian community. The following week I organized a meeting with the leaders and gave them an appointment to share their experiences.

The first leader shared with me how he was involved in the massacre of the Tutsi in 1994 and that he killed many people in different places He also shared about his life in prison for 15 years as well as his life after being released from the prison. He said, "Being released from the prison was not enough, I feel like I am still a prisoner in my heart. I have never felt relieved even after I approached the survivors of the families I exterminated to ask for forgiveness. I find it difficult to tell them what happened. I am like a dead person, only the survivors are able to heal me but I fear to approach them."[1]

The second one was the secretary who had lost the whole family including her husband and children. She asked, "how can reconciliation be possible? It is very difficult. I cannot reconcile with the persons who killed members of my family. They cannot bring them back. It is as if they never existed. No! I cannot reconcile with them because they cannot take away my pain." [2]When she was talking I could see some signs of trauma and hatred in her and at the same time I found out that the perpetrators were feeling guilty but still fearing the victims of the genocide.

[1] James Habimana, *Testimony on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and Life after Imprisonment*, 2016.
[2] Mary Uwamahoro, *Testimony on the Experience of Loss and Challenges of Reconciliation after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi*, 2016.

I still remember how I felt after their sharing that this was against Christian values. I also felt that this experience would grow in them and lead them to revenge or perpetual hatred.

As a priest, I am deeply concerned about this situation, asking myself how can I bring true reconciliation and healing among these Christians. This is why I have dicided to write on the spiritual impact of reconciliation and healing process of survivors and perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda.

**I. Purpose of the Dissertation**

To find ways and means on how reconciliation can be effected in order to heal the survivors and perpetrators of Genocide in Rwanda.

**II. Rationale of the Dissertation**

The motivation of undertaking this study is that when I was working in Rugango Parish from 2015 to 2018, I experienced that there was lack of communication and collaboration between the survivors and perpetrators of genocide. Seeing such a scenario, I have decided to make efforts to find ways and means of promoting reconciliation between the survivors and perpetrators of Rwandan genocide so that they can be healed and nourished in their spiritual life.

**III. The Central Question of Investigation**

How can reconciliation be effected on the survivors and perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda so that the healing process can take place?

**IV. Working Hypothesis**

i. We hypothesize that after serving their jail sentence, the perpetrators of genocide believe that there is no need to reconcile with the survivors.

ii. Probably the Church in Butare Diocese is afraid of opening the wounds of those affected by Genocide, by maintaining silence hoping that the case will disappear.

iii. Perhaps by organizing continuous workshops, conferences, retreats and games on reconciliation between the survivors and perpetrators, the commission of Justice and Peace in Butare diocese can help in healing both parties.

**V. Methodological Consideration**

The research makes use of methodological approach normally used in the department of Spiritual Theology.

**i. Foundational Approach**

The research puts forward a formational element of human experience from a lived experience of reconciliation and healing process of the survivors and perpetrators of the genocide. From what is foundational we experience elements that are formative in application.

**ii. Dialogical Approach**

Here, the universal elements which are basic to human experience of reconciliation and healing process of the survivors of the genocide are disclosed and then engaged in dialogue with the theories of other disciplines such as theology, spirituality, the scripture, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and experiences of different authors.

**iii. Integrational Approach**

All the insights and findings disclosed in the research are integrated into a new body of knowledge that can be applied to enhance the understanding of spiritual impact of reconciliation on healing process of survivors and perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda.

# CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING PROCESS IN BUTARE DIOCESE

## Introduction

The chapter investigates the background of reconciliation and healing process in Butare Diocese. It has seven main sections namely, brief history of the Diocese, its geographical factors, socio-economic, political and Cultural settings, genocide ideology, denial and divisions, traditional court, recovery after genocide, unity and reconciliation. The chapter will conclude with an integrative reflection.

## 1.1 Brief History of Butare Diocese

The Diocese of Butare is an ecclesiastical diocese of the Roman Catholic Church which is located in Butare town, the second largest urban town in Rwanda.[3] The Diocese was erected on 11 September 1961 as the Diocese of Astrida[4] by Pope John XXIII, and was later renamed as the Diocese of Butare on 12 November 1963 by Pope Paul VI.[5] As Diocese, Butare was curved from the old Archdiocese of Kabyayi. Its first Bishop, Mgr. Jean Baptiste Gahamanyi, was consecrated on 6th January 1962. He served as the ordinary until January 1997 when he retired from his episcopal office and eventually died on 19th June 1999. On 30th March 1992 during the episcopate of Mgr. Jean Baptiste Gahamanyi, the Diocese of Gikongoro was created out of Butare Diocese with its First Bishop Mgr. Augustine Misago. After the resignation of Mgr. Jean Baptiste Gahamanyi, Mgr. Philip Rukamba was appointed on the 18th January 1997

[3] Butare Catholic Diocese, *Butare Situation*, (Butare: Butare Press, 1999), 6.

[4] The Belgian colonial rulers established the city in the 1920s and named the city *Astrida*, in honor of Queen Astrid of Belgium, Its name was changed after Rwanda gained independence in 1962. After the independence the name of the city was cha Byiringiro nged to Butare. Before the administrative reform of 2006, Butare was also the capital of a province until 2002 to which it gave its name. The city was then incorporated into the Huye district, from which it took the name in 2006, but the name Butare remains mainly used.

[5] *Roman Catholic Diocese of Butare*, https://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki (Accessed 18/ 2/2022).

and consecrated Bishop on 12th April 1997. His Motto is: "Considerate Iesum", that is "consider Jesus."[6]

Butare Diocese is located in the South of Rwanda; bordering Kigali Archdiocese in the East, Gikongoro Diocese in the West, Kabyayi Diocese in the North and Republic of Burundi in the South. The City of Butare renamed recently Huye town is the capital of the Diocese; is the second urban agglomeration of the Country. It has also the highest number of religious communities because of many houses of formation.

Administratively, Butare Diocese has 192 Nursery Schools, 206 Primary Schools, 112 Secondary Schools as well as Catholic University of Rwanda which stated on 12th July 2010. In the Sector of social works, The Diocese has a Hospital, 15 Health Centers, 3 Homes for elderly people, 4 Centers of physically handicapped, 3 Centers for rehabilitating Street children, 1 Center for mentally ill and 2 centers that help people living with HIV/ AIDS.[7]

The evangelization process in Butare Diocese began at Save, the first Catholic mission in Rwanda in 1900.[8] Butare Diocese currently has 26 parishes. It covers an area of approximately 1,958 square kilometers with the total population of 931,388 people of whom 57,27% are Catholics.[9] The Diocese houses the National Major Seminary of Nyakibanda which trained hundreds of priests from Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The Diocese has also diocesan Major Propaedeutic Seminary which prepares young people for the continuation of their formation towards priesthood.[10]

[6] Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics,* (Huye: Imprimerie de Butare, 2018), 1.
[7] Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics,*1.
[8] Adekunle, Julius, *Culture and Customs of Rwanda,* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 33.
[9] Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics,* (Huye: Imprimerie de Butare, 2018), 1.
[10] *Inside Nyakibanda Seminary: How the Church is moving*, http/: Newtimes.co.rw, (accessed 11/2/2022).

## 1.2 Geographical Factors of Butare Diocese

### 1.2.1 Location

Butare Catholic Diocese, originally named Astrida, is one of the nine Catholic Dioceses located in Southern Republic of Rwanda with 26 parishes. It was part of the ecclesiastical constituency of the Archdiocese of Kabgayi. Its area was 4,684 square Kilometers until 1976 when a new division with the Kabgayi Diocese reduced it. On 30th March 1992, Butare Diocese was divided into two independent dioceses, namely, Butare Catholic Diocese and Gikongoro Catholic Diocese.

After the creation of Gikongoro Diocese, Butare Diocese remained with 1, 958 square Kilometers. Butare Diocese is separated from Gikongoro Diocese in the West by the Mwogo River. The southern part borders the Republic of Burundi while the northern part touches the boundary of Kabgayi Diocese. In the South East there is the Archdiocese of Kigali.[11]

### 1.2.2 Demography

According to the 2018 Annual Statistics of Butare Diocese, the total population is 931,388 of whom 533,406 are Catholics. The ratio is 57.27% are Catholics and 42.73% are members of other Churches and denominations.[12]

## 1.3 Socio-Economic, Political and Cultural settings

Rwanda is a landlocked country in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa covering roughly 25,000 square Kilometers of land and 1,400 square Kilometers of water. The political, social and economic context of Rwanda is profoundly affected by the civil wars of the early 1990s and genocide of 1994. The country continues to deal with the consequences. The population in

[11] Diocese de Butare, *Jubiléed'Or du Diocèse de Butare 1961-2012*, (Kigali: Pallotti Press, 2012),6.
[12] Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics*, 1.

Southern Province of Rwanda where Butare Diocese is located, has undergone several socio-economic, political and cultural experiences over the years.

### 1.3.1 Social Setting

Social life is part and parcel of the people of Butare diocese. As noted by John S. Mbiti, "What happens to the individual happens to whole group and what happens to the whole group happens to the individual."[13] After the genocide of 1994, Rwanda was left as a society of countless victims with deep wounds in need of healing. The Rwandan society was broken and characterized by distrust and fear between citizens with lack of shared national unity.[14] After violence, conflicting parties are separated from one another. Fear, suspicion, mistrust, hatred and misperception are the major characteristics of their relationship. To deal with this problem, the restorative justice[15] approaches brought together former genocide perpetrators and survivors of genocide in "Reconciliation villages." In many cases, offenders live next door to victims whom they directly confronted and harmed in the events of the genocide.

Regarding the acts of assistance for vulnerable people the Diocesan Caritas of Butare is one of the 9 autonomous diocesan Caritas members of the national Caritas Rwanda created in 1960 and affiliated to Caritas Internationalis. It gives back the Human dignity denied to them by social marginalization, poverty and injustice. It would like to see the poorest social categories

[13]In his seminal book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Mbiti (1989,106) posited that in Africa, "the individual cannot exist alone except corporately. She owes her existence to other people, including those of past generations and her contemporaries". Concomitantly, "whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual." In the same vein, commenting on the Kikuyu peoples' way of life, former Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta (1965,296) wrote that "according to Kikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual. Rather, their uniqueness is a secondary fact about them; first and foremost they are several people's relatives and several people's contemporaries. People are closely interconnected with one another in a lifestyle oriented to the other".

[14]National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, *Unity and Reconciliation: Understanding Unity & Reconciliation Profess 15 Years after Genocide, NURC Review Magazine*, (Nairobi: UNON Publishing Services Section, 2010), 3.

[15]Restorative justice is an innovative approach that has been advanced in recent years as an alternative way of dealing with offending behaviour by making victims, offenders and communities the key participants in working out how to deal with the aftermath of crime.

manage to take charge of them, individually or through social solidarity, in order to fulfill their dignity as children of God created in his image.[16]

The main mission of Diocesan Caritas of Butare is to study the problems of assistance and material, social and moral assistance specific to the regions where Caritas operates in order to promote the solution, organize, encourage, direct and support all charity work for the poor and vulnerable of all categories; to rescue individuals and families particularly affected without any distinction, whether of race, religion, sex or any other form and to represent and safeguard his interests, works and services before public authorities and official institutions.[17]

The departments of administration and finance are responsible for taking care of the material needs of the people and in ensuring that socio-charity works are done in accordance with the Caritas directives, particularly, in helping the needy and protecting the most vulnerable in society like orphans and survivors of genocide. They also encourage people to have hygiene in their families, to supply the medicines and foods for the prisoners of Huye, most of whom are genocide perpetrators. They also take care of street children.[18]

#### 1.3.1.1 Health Sector

Rwanda has been moving very rapidly to expand health service delivery. It has dramatically accelerated the trend of progress on health indicators. One of interrelated innovative reforms contributed to improvement was community-based health insurance known in Rwanda as *mutuelles de santé* or *mutuelles.*[19] *Mutuelles* were reinitiated as pilot projects in Rwanda in 1999 and uptake accelerated sharply in 2004–2005 with the adoption of a national policy on

[16] *Caritas Rwanda*, https://www.caritas.org/ou-nous-trouver/afrique/rwanda/?lang fr, (Accessed 30/3/2022).
[17] *Caritas diocesaine de Butare*, https://www.caritasrwanda.org/old_web/index.php/fr/caritas-rwanda/caritas-diocesaines/butare, (Accessed 30/3/ 2022).
[18] Diocesan Caritas of Butare, *Our Efforts in Socio-economic Development of the Poor in 2018: Annual Report of Caritas*, (Butare: Butare, April, 2019), 5.
[19] Laurent Musango, "Sharing the burden of sickness: mutual health insurance in Rwanda" in World Health Organization," Vol 86, (November 2008), 817-908.

*mutuelles* and a roll-out of the schemes with the financial and technical support of development partners. As of April 2022, every Rwandan is obliged by law to have some form of health insurance.

There are currently several health insurance programs in Rwanda targeting specific groups of the population. However, the biggest in terms of participating was more than they could afford, today nearly everyone in the village, most of them farmers, understands the usefulness of the *mutuelles* system. In 2008, Rwanda was the only country in sub-Saharan Africa in which 85% of the population participated in mutual insurance programs for their health coverage.[20]

Health insurance became mandatory for all individuals in 2008, in 2010 over 90% of the population was covered. In 2012, only about 4% were uninsured.[21] Catholic Church was not left behind in healthcare of the citizen; CORAR Ltd is was Rwandan company that was established in 2000 through the initiative of the institutions of the Catholic Church in various Dioceses. The company started trading from 2001 to 2014 offering various services including Medical insurance.[22]

Butare Diocese, in the Sector of Health has some health facilities including a referral hospital and health centers. The Diocese has a Hospital, 15 Health Centers, 3 Homes for elderly people, 4 Centers for physically handicapped, 1 Center for mentally ill and 2 centers that help people living with HIV/ AIDS.[23] Ten years after the genocide, thousands of survivors are dying of AIDS. The Rwandan Widows' Association says that an estimated 70% of its 25 000 members are HIV positive, mainly because they were gang-raped during the massacres.[24]

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**20** Musango, *Sharing the burden of sickness: mutual health insurance in Rwanda*, 908.
21 Rosenberg Tina (3 July 2012). "In Rwanda, Health Care Coverage That Eludes the U.S." *The New York Times*. New York, N.Y. Retrieved 19 August 2015.
22 https://www.imali.biz/announce-31-4849.html (accessed 15/2/2022).
23 Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics*, 1.
24 National Library of medicine, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC390156/ (Accessed 18/05/2022).

#### 1.3.1.2 Education

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.[25] According to Socrates, the Greek philosopher, "Education is the greatest tool of knowing and connecting the truth about the past, the present and the future, for development of humanity, nature and divine.[26] The role played by education in development cannot be compromised if the country is to move from being third world to a middle income economy.

The White Fathers under Cardinal Lavigerie received from the chief permission to propagate the Gospel to the people. Using material means, they were not less exhorted by Lavigerie himself to take care of the youth in a particular way in order to ascertain the pursuit of their mission' that holds the future." It is thus that every mission station the White Fathers constructed a school for the youngsters with the aim of forming the natives as efficient future agents for propagation of the Christian doctrine. It is for this reason that they wanted to increase their thinking level and raise their intellectual conception. At the same time they focused on presenting to them the social structures, to make them professionals inspired by Christian morality. From the beginning, this shows how the school was one of the most principal preoccupations of missionaries in spite of the material difficulties of all kinds. The missionaries who had arrived in Rwanda earlier than the German colonizers had set up some missionary schools to educate Rwandan youth. The Belgian colonizers continued to allow the Church to provide social services, such as education and health.[27]

[25]Timothy Reagan, *Non-Western Educational Traditions: Alternative Approaches to Educational Thought and Practice* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2005), 108.
[26] Clement Majawa, *Patristic science and education*, (Nairobi: Scroll Technologies), 47.
[27] Jessica Walker-Kelleher, "Reconceptualizing the Relationship Between Conflict and Education: The Case of Rwanda," *The Fletcher Journal of Human Security*, 34 (2006), 253.

In 1905, the five mission stations counted about ten schools which had about 40 students. In 1910, ten mission stations had 33 schools with 1,250 youngsters. The Seminary began at Kabyayi in 1913 and it became a regional seminary in 1931 for the Apostolic Vicariate of Rwanda, Burundi, Kivu and Lake Albert. When it was raised to this level it required to establish a systematic organization and a suitable place for its final settlement. So after examining different sites, Nyakibanda was chosen as the suitable quiet place with an abundance of water to build a regional seminary. In 1936 the Seminary was transferred under the name of St. Charles Borromeo Major Seminary of Nyakibanda. This is only National Seminary of theology in Rwanda. It is located in Butare Catholic Diocese.

Major Seminary of Nyakibanda trains hundreds of priests from Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The Diocese has also diocesan Major Propaedeutic Seminary which prepares young people for the continuation of their formation towards the priesthood. Butare Diocese has 192 Kindergarten Schools, 206 Primary Schools, 112 Secondary Schools as well as Catholic University of Rwanda which stated on 12th July 2010.[28]

The education and training system today is structured into four main levels. A pre-primary level, which lasts three years, precedes the primary level that lasts six years. Above primary school, two levels exist, the first being technical or vocational education, which aims at preparing students to enter the labour market once they complete this level, and the second being secondary education, aimed at those students that wish to pursue a college or university degree before entering the labour market. Each of these levels is a six-year program. A fourth level is available for those completing secondary education or, in some cases, such as technical courses like those in the areas of engineering, the technical or vocational levels. This education level is referred to as higher learning as it comprises colleges and universities, lasting a

[28] Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics*, 1.

maximum of seven years. The Nine-Year Basic Education Policy aims at ensuring that all children are 'able to get education in nine years (six years of primary education and three years of general cycle of secondary education) without paying school fees.[29]

### 1.3.2 Economic Setting

Economic factors have also shaped and worsened the effects and the extent of the genocide. Turshen notes that four socio-economic factors shaped the extent of genocide, namely, the abrupt drop in the price of coffee coupled with a 1989 currency devaluation and rapid inflation after 1990; a structural adjustment programme combined with a drought in the southern regions which turned into a famine; the war in the north (1990) that drained government resources and created huge refugee camps in the north of Kigali and the 'paradox of democratisation in Africa' which caused opposition to the already embattled government.[30]

After the genocide, the government of Rwanda has through several economic and social reforms targeted the development of the poor households where the aim is to put these households on a trajectory that leads to a higher standard of living. The natural target is the agricultural sector, especially in rural areas, as it is the primary source of economic growth and development.

### 1.3.3 Political Setting

The Republic of Rwanda is landlocked country in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda. It has a population of over 12 million. The aftermath of the 1994 genocide and the armed conflicts that preceded it continue to weigh heavily on the political stability of Rwanda. Before colonization,

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[29] MINEDUC, *Nine-Year Basic Education Implementation – Fast Track Strategies*, (Kigali, 2008),3.

[30]Meredeth Turshen, The Political Economy of Rape: An analysis of systematic rape and sexual abuse of women during armed conflict in Africa. In: Moser, C. and F.C. Clark eds. *Victims, perpetrators or actors? Gender, armed conflicts and political violence*, (London: Zed Books, 2001), 57–58.

the Rwandans who were given a culture-oriented education based on traditional society model characterized by the National Unity and strong patriotism which is national pride of the feeling of love, devotion and sense of attachment to a homeland and alliance with other citizens who share the same sentiment, had not yet experienced divisive politics and ethnic theories fabricated by colonial masters. [31]

The genocide in Rwanda was politically planned and executed exercise to annihilate Rwanda's Tutsi and Hutu populations who disagreed with extremist politics. Here, genocide had much more complex roots than just deep ethnic hatred.[32] Its main causes were political. They were rooted in the manipulation of the history of Rwanda by both colonial and post-colonial leaders and can therefore be attributed to both internal and external factors. The history of Rwanda was manipulated before independence by Germany and Belgium and after independence by inefficient local leadership[33] and the failure of democracy.[34] International indifference and the involvement of some Western countries who were accomplices made it possible for genocide to occur.[35]

The Diocese of Astrida actual Butare Catholic Diocese, was erected when the country was in a situation of political crisis that was characterized by a lot of violence, insecurity, ethnic division and discrimination (1959-1963). These are the years also of civil independence.[36] Since the late 1990's, Rwanda repeatedly witnessed socio-political conflicts. All those

[31] Stephen Nathanson, *Patriotism, Morality, and Peace,* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 34-35.
[32] Feargal Keane, *Season of blood: A Rwandan journey*, (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 8.
[33] Meredeth Turshen, The political economy of rape: An analysis of systematic rape and sexual abuse of women during armed conflict in Africa. In: Moser, C. and F.C. Clark eds. *Victims, perpetrators or actors? Gender, armed conflicts and political violence*, (London: Zed Books, 2001), 57.
[34] Michael Mann, *The dark side of democracy: Explaining ethnic cleansing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.
[35] Michael N. Barnett. The UN Security Council, indifference and genocide in Rwanda. *Cultural Anthropology*, (2005), 551.
[36] *Revue Des Grands Seminalistes de Nyakibanda: Urunana,* no 130, Noel 2011, 45eme Année.

atrocities culminated into the 1994 genocide. During this period, the youth were exploited and manipulated by politicians to carry out destruction and random killings in the country.[37]

Nyanza, one of 26 parishes of Butare Diocese was the capital of the Kingdom of Rwanda from 1958 to 1962. It is now the capital town of Southern Province of Rwanda. The town shelters the museum of the Palace of the last King of Rwanda Mutara III Rudahigwa (1931-1959). On the nearby hill of palace is the tomb of the King and his wife. Nyanza has also the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), whose court continues to hear cases relating to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.[38]

### 1.3.4 Cultural Setting

Rwanda's culture is diverse, encompassing various aspects such as religion, cuisine, clothing traditions, language, marriage customs, music, ethical beliefs, table etiquette, greetings for visitors, interpersonal behavior with loved ones, and countless other elements.[39]However, this rich cultural tapestry underwent significant changes due to the country's tumultuous history. Events like civil war, genocide, massive migrations, economic crises, diseases, the return of refugees, imprisonment, and environmental destruction have left a lasting impact on Rwanda's cultural landscape.

The roots of violence in Rwanda are more complex than most people had imagined and the terms Hutus and Tutsis refer to constructed categories of different socio-economic positions within Rwandan society.[40] Melvern states that these two ethnic groups shared the same

[37] The Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Youth, *Culture and Sports National Youth Policy*, retrieved from http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Rwanda_2005_National_Youth_Policy (Accessed 15/7/2022).
[38]Nyanza,https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nyanza#:~:text=Nyanza%20est%20une%20ville%20du,durant%20le%20g%C3%A9nocide%20en%201994.( Accessed 25/05/2022)
[39] Cristina De Rossi, *Culture definition*, https://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Rwanda.html (Accessed 10th February 2022).
[40]Christian Jennings, *Across the Red River, Rwanda, Burundi and the heart of darkness*, (London: Phoenix, 2001), 65.

language, culture and lived in the same village with intermarrying and people exchanging identities. A pure ethnic divide is a myth.[41]

According to Mamdani, it was the Belgian reform of the colonial era in the decade from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s that established Hutus as indigenous Bantu and Tutsis as alien Hamites. This Hamitic hypothesis, he argues, explained away every sign of civilisation in tropical Africa as a foreign import. Hutu and Tutsi became political identities connected to the origins of the violence.[42]

The Rwandan genocide was not a simple matter of mutual hatred between tribes erupting into irrational violence.[43] Rwanda's bloodbath was not tribal but rather it was a distinctly modern tragedy, a degenerated class conflict minutely prepared and callously executed which the world failed to see. This indicates the complexity of the genocide in Rwanda and suggests that if class issues are not adequately addressed, the prospect of genocide exists.[44]

#### 1.3.4.1 Religion

Traditionally, the Rwandans believe in one personal and living Supreme Being called *Imana*. *Imana,* which means God, is the personal Being who created all beings and sustains them in existence.

Rwanda is one of the most Christianized nations in Africa, also called the " First Catholic Kingdom of Africa."[45] The most recent national census of 2012 indicates that 43.7% of

[41] Melvern Linda, *A people betrayed: The role of the West in Rwanda's genocide*, (Cape Town: National Assessment of Educational Process, 2000),11.
[42] Mahmood Mamdani, *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism and the genocide in Rwanda, (*Princeton:Princeton University Press,2001), 9-20.
[43] Keane,7.
[44] Johan Pottier, *Re-imagining Rwanda: Conflict, survival and disinformation in the late twentieth century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9.
[45] John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994), 249.

Rwanda's population is Roman Catholic, 37.7% is Protestant, 11.8% is Seventh-day Adventist, 2.5% claims no religious affiliation, 2.0% is Muslim mainly Sunni, and 0.7% is Jehovah's Witness. The evangelization of this country began in the early 1900s while the country was under the German colonial rule.[46] In 1894, the Apostolic Vicariate of Nyanza Meridionale was created in which Rwanda was located and Bishop John Joseph Hirth became the Bishop of this Vicariate. Under his guidance the first missionaries arrived at the court of Umwami (king) in the capital Nyanza (actual Nyanza Parish in Butare Diocese) on 2nd of February 1900. They belonged to the congregation of the Missionaries of Africa, commonly known as the White Fathers.[47]

The history of Catholic expansion in Butare Diocese and generally in Rwanda comes from the apostolic activity of Cardinal Lavigerie and his White Fathers, united in the commonly called: Society of Missionaries of African founded in Algeria in 1868, and their mission was to bring the Good News and Christian civilization in Africa which had not been catechized. On 17th June 1878, they began the journey towards the region of the Great Lakes; they arrived in Tabora on 12th September 1878. It took 22 years for the White Fathers to enter the Diocese of Butare.[48]

After the arrival of the Missionaries of African headed by Bishop John Hirth on 2nd February 1900, they were sent by the King to begin their mission at Save hill on 8th February the same year. This is a central place in the densely populated south having some sixty thousand people within a three-mile radius.[49] This shows that Butare Diocese is the first Diocese to welcome the first missionaries in Rwanda, and its parish, Save, is the first to be catechized among other parishes in Rwanda. This makes it to be a center of evangelization in the whole country.

[46] After the War, Rwanda was entrusted as a Mandate to Belgium by the League of Nations and became practically one single administrative complex with the Belgian Congo.
[47] *Revue des Grands Seminalistes de Nyakibanda: Urunana,* No. 130, Noel 2011, 45 ème Année.
[48] Ferdinand Nahimana, *Le Blanc est* arrivé*, le Roi Est Parti: Une Facette de l'Histoire de Rwanda Contemporain* 1894-1931, (Kigali: Presses de la Printer Set, 1987), 55.
[49] Nahimana, *Le Blanc Est arrivé, le Roi est parti,* 248.

In a time span of one hundred days, between April and July 1994, Rwanda's political arena imploded. The genocide occurred in one of Africa's most Christian regions, with 90% of the population identifying itself as part of a Catholic, Protestant, or Seventh-day Adventist Church as of 1991.[50] Inevitably, in the aftershock of the genocide, many questioned the role, and attempted to fathom the association of Rwanda's Churches with the genocide. As a consequence, the Church has faced numerous criticisms from diverse fronts, and has been repeatedly blamed of culpability in the violence that occurred during those obscure months.[51]

In the years following the genocide, a major denunciation has imputed the Church for its passivity and inaction in the face of the slaughters, committing a sin of omission and lack of action. However, it was only in 2017 that Pope Francis, upon meeting the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, officially asked for forgiveness for the Catholic Church's role in the 1994 genocide, stating that, in Rwanda, the "sins and failings of the Church and its members had ultimately disfigured the face of Catholicism."

#### 1.3.4.2 Language

The Rwandan saying "*Utaganiriye na se ntamenya icyo sekuru yasize avuze*" which is loosely translated as "Whoever doesn't talk to the father, will not know what the grandfather said," highlights the importance of communication of tradition or accounts about knowledge in the past, handed down from generation to generation. Kinyarwanda is a unifying factor within Rwanda, since it is spoken almost universally; unfortunately genocide took place in the country where people speak the same language. Closely related to Kirundi (spoken in Burundi), Mashi (spoken in the South Kivu region of Congo), and Kiha (spoken in northwestern Tanzania), Kinyarwanda is a Bantu language. Less than 10 percent of Rwanda's population also speaks

[50]Timothy Longman, Church, Politics and the Genocide in Rwanda, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, (2001), 31(2), 163-186.
[51] Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010),65.

French, and a small portion speaks English, primarily refugees returned from Uganda and Kenya. Kinyarwanda is the primary cultural identifier for Rwandans living outside Rwanda.[52]

### 1.4 Genocide Ideology, Denial and Divisions

Divisionism and Genocide ideology was taught for a long time in Rwanda since the arrival of colonial powers. The first hindrance, which has always been plaguing Rwanda, for a long time, is the fuelling of divisions, discrimination, and Genocide ideology.[53]

A well-planned and widely executed genocide began in Rwanda on April 7, 1994 and resulted in the savage death of up to one million helpless children, women and men. This genocide was the conclusion of a four-year period in which tens of thousands of people died as a result of civil conflict and extremist violence. Both of these procedures took place against the backdrop of the unresolved effects of prior acts of violence in Rwanda and Burundi, including a burgeoning refugee crisis. They signaled the start of further bloodshed in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire which has continued to this day.[54] In order to have an understanding of the ideology of genocide, denials and division it is important to look at how the division among the ethnic groups surfaced by looking at the historical perspective.

#### 1.4.1 Historical Perspective

In pre-colonial Rwanda, people irrespective of their social group as Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, identified themselves not by ethnic groups, which were even unknown to them, but by a social organization based primarily on the clan.[55] Indeed, there has been unanimity among the ethno-historians that the clan was by far the most important social organization in pre-colonial Rwanda. Equally, scholars agree that the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa constituted social classes and

[52] Diocese of Butare, *Annual Statistics*,1.
[53] Medard Rutijanwa, *During NURC's 2nd Summit on unity and reconciliation*, 2002.
[54] Peter Uvin, Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide in Rwanda in *African Studies Review*, (1997) 40(2), 91-115.
[55]Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1990-1994*, (Oregon: Regnum Books International, 2005), 11.

that all the three mix in the same clans. All Rwandans, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, shared 18 clans.[56] A clan is a social category whose members acknowledge descent from an eponymous common ancestor, real or mythical. It is a common denominator that unites many different lineages, who do not necessarily know each other.[57]

The presence of the three ethnic groups Hutu, Tutsi and Twa in each of the clans is one of the significant phenomena characterizing unity of Rwandan people.[58] Likewise, D'Heltefelt, in his study completed at the end of 1950s, summarized the existing studies on the notion of clan, all of which included Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. He also emphasized that, irrespective of being Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, the members of the same clan had in common many factors such as totems, religious beliefs and ritual functions.[59]

Other scholars assert that before colonialism, Rwanda was possessed by a group called Banyarwanda who were isolated along monetary lines. There were three fundamental monetary exercises and individuals were ordered by the occupation that they embraced. The occupations were pastoralism, cultivation or development, and assembling or hunting. The people who were cultivators came to be called Bahutu, the pastoralists came to be called Batutsi and the hunters were called Batwa.[60] They all lived respectively, subject to one another socially and monetarily. The pastoralists, because of their monetary prevalence, expected influential positions inside the general public followed by the cultivators and the Batwa being the least subordinates. It is vital

[56] It is often contended that those clans are 18, even if there remain an argument about their number, because for example Alexis Kagame ascertains that they are 15: The 18 clans often mentioned, alphabetically here, are: *Ababanda, Abacyaba, Abagesera, Abaha, Abahondogo, Abakono, Abanyakarama, Abashambo, Abashingo, Abasindi, Abasinga, Abasita, Abatsobe, Abazigaba, Abega, Abenengwe, Abongera, Abungura.* (See D'Heltefelt, M. (1971). *Les Clans du Rwanda ancien: Eléments d'ethnohistoire et d'ethnosociologie,* Terrvuren: MRAC; De Lacger, Ruanda).

[57] Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1990-1994*, 10.

[58] Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1990-1994,*10.

[59] Marcel D'Heltefelt, *Les Clans du Rwanda ancien: Eléments d'ethnohistoire et d'ethnosociologie,* (Terrvuren: MRAC De Lacger, 1971), 10.

[60] Mahmood Mamdan, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nationalism and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (Princeton University Press, 2001), 199.

to take note of that the status or the character of the Banyarwanda was not regular. One was not naturally introduced to a particular gathering but instead their status was a memorable development. It is indispensable to make reference to now the way that an individual or a family had the option to move starting with one character then onto the next through an interaction called *kwihutura*. In the event that a Hutu purchased cows and turned into a pastoralist, he and his family became Tutsi and simultaneously assuming a Tutsi became poor and lost his cows and went into development, he and his family became Hutu. These transitory characters were instrumental in guaranteeing dependability and a chance for all. The financial matters decided the legislative issues, and everyone lived close by one another calmly until the appearance of German colonialists.[61]

The appearance of German colonialists in the mid nineteenth century presented shakiness in the socio-political relations of Rwanda when they looked to naturalize the distinctions among Banyarwanda, which until recently were just financial. Without a doubt, race, as a political character, was forced by the power of the frontier regulations during the provincial time frame. After the Second World War, Rwanda was put under the protectorate of Belgium as the new colonial power. Using divide and rule method they utilized the Batutsi who had proactively been administering close by the Germans as the bosses and had expected positions of authority locally to oversee the country.[62] The Tutsi became bosses under the white colonizers while different gatherings, the Hutu and the Batwa, turned out to be overwhelmingly their subjects. It is crucial to specify that this is the point at which the seed of contention were planted in Rwanda. As we will investigate later, these political characters were imitated and reaffirmed

[61] Mahmood Mamdan, *Citezen and Subject' Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Later Colonialsim*, (Princeton: Universty Press, 1996), 78.
[62] Mamdan, *Citezen and Subject' Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Later Colonialsim,*78.

in the post-pioneer time, henceforth the propagation of contention between ethnic gatherings or races bringing about the 1994 annihilation.

In a striking manner, individuals were labeled as outsiders based on perceived racial differences, while nationality was assigned to those considered native. In this specific scenario, the Hutu were identified as the native group, and the Tutsi were labeled as outsiders. The process of kwihutura, which involved changing social identities, was eliminated. This meant that individuals were born into and confined within a single social status or identity. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that this distinction was a significant cause of conflict, as one group was deemed more privileged than the others.[63] Those who saw themselves as sentenced to subjection and abuse will undoubtedly revolt in future against those they saw as their oppressors. This was the presentation of the legislative issues of avoidance, by which every one of the honors and assets were held for the Tutsi, while the Hutu and Batwa were generally prohibited and mistreated socially, financially and politically. It was these naturalized personalities, honors and rejections that turned into the premise of the struggles that led to 1994 genocide and subsequent destruction in Rwanda.[64]

The presentation of a democratic rules system introduced the Rwandan upset of 1959, towards the finish of expansionism. The Hutu greater part who were persecuted and avoided revolted and opposed the overarching governmental issues of rejection and abuse, henceforth the primary significant struggle. The greater part Hutu took over power and in 1961 Rwanda was liberated from the frontier servitude of the Belgians and was set to turning into a new state.[65] It ought to be referenced that with autonomy, African States were set in a position where they

[63] Mahmood Mamdan, From Conquest to Consent as a Basis of State Formation: Refferections on Rwanda, *New Left View*, (1996), A (216), 3-36.
[64] Mamdan, *Citezen and Subject' Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Later Colonialsim,* 55.
[65] Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 1959-1994: History of Genocide*, (London: Hurst & Co, 1995), 40.

were to modify their needs for motivations behind dependability, and development.[66] The fundamental issue, concerning the connection between open approach and cultural objectives in Africa, is the degree to which legislatures can fulfil individuals' assumptions for freedom. For example, their earnest expectation that independence from pilgrim rule would usher them into another period of equivalent open doors, fundamental privileges and opportunities which were incomprehensible during provincial rule. Like most other recently free African expresses, the new Rwandan State was confronted with the phenomenal test of common organization for the acknowledgment of its public goals.[67]

The Belgians gave over capacity to the main President of the Republic of Rwanda in 1961, after the presentation of a majority rules system. Since the standards of present day vote based system direct that the greater part go with restricting choices and take on positions of authority, Gregoire Kayibanda, a Hutu head of the *Paramehutu* ideological group, turned into the principal Rwandan president.[68]

The political issues of avoidance and mistreatment were reaffirmed by the new government by which the philosophy that drove the Kayibanda system was that of prohibition, uprooting and substitution. The dislodging of the Tutsi and the substitution of the Hutu to influential places, impact and honour prompted the formation of an elite Hutu State from the restrictive Tutsi State consequently sustaining the governmental issues of social, financial and political rejection and oppression.[69] One can subsequently contend that freedom never acquired any basic change in the country. What was seen is the switched pattern of abuse and incomparability where Hutu persecution and Tutsi matchless quality were turned around leaving the Kayibanda

[66] Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 1959-1994: History of Genocide*, 40
[67] Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 1959-1994: History of Genocide*,40.
[68] [68] Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 1959-1994: History of Genocide*,40.
[69] Philip, Verwimp, Peasnt Ideology and Genocide in Rwanda Under Habyarimana, in *Cook, S. E*. (eds): *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda*. https://files.ethz.ch/isn/92171/GS19 (Accessed 6/07/2022).

system with the goal of vengeance instead of country building. This situation was a formula for proceeded with struggle. The expectations for everyday comforts of everybody were exceptionally low and had not improved since autonomy. The State neglected to establish a decent climate for industrialization to occur. Things had not changed for the common Hutu; they were as yet poor and needed the chances to use themselves. Joblessness was heightening, prompting further disturbance at the State's ability to pivot the events.[70]

It is vital to take note of that this system controlled the course of public socialization by which the Tutsi were not generally considered to be a race yet rather were changed into an ethnic gathering. This was a principal change since it implied that they were all Banyarwanda. It anyway didn't change the status quo.[71] The rejection, persecution and legitimate separation was even escalated through coordinated establishments like schools where one was expected to distinguish oneself as Hutu, Twa or a Tutsi.[72] Since the overarching philosophies appeared to be not to carry quick advantages to the decision class, rather belief systems of radicalism, narrow mindedness and tribalism created and acquired unmistakable quality, prompting further conflict.[73]

The toppling of Kayibanda's system in 1973 by a gathering of Hutu military commanders from the Forces Armes Rwandaise (FAR) in a tactical overthrow and the party *Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement* (MRND) prompted the resulting administration of General Juvenal Habyarimana as the new Hutu president. This administration acquainted novel thoughts that appeared with be comprehensive particularly during their

[70] Post-Independence, Rwandan *Development Gateway*. http://www.rwandagateway.org/article.php3 (accessed 10/3/2022)
[71] Ervin Staub, Genocide and Mass Killing: Origins, Prevention, Healing and Reconciliation. *Political Psychology*, Vol.21, No.2 (2000), 367-382.
[72] Mahmood Mamdan, *When Victims Become Killers: Rwanda*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 199.
[73] Mamdan, *When Victims Become Killers,*199.

mission to be perceived as a genuine government.[74] Unfortunately these thoughts never made it into the new constitution and the arrangement of persecution, predation prohibition still prevailed.[75]

Whenever there was discontent with government, the system rushed to ascribe the demolishing circumstance to the past Tutsi system involving it as a substitute. This kept on making contempt between the two clans. Besides, the Habyarimana system stifled all types of political resistance involving nationality as the motivation to remain in power. Orders were given and expected to be completed all through the nation and this at last turned into an exceptionally successful device for the mass preparation of the Hutu regular citizens against their Tutsi partners who the system saw as enemies.[76]

### 1.4.2 Origin of Genocide in Rwanda

The term "genocide" was first coined by Polish lawyer Raphäel Lemkin in 1944 in his book entitled *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* by combining *geno,* from Greek meaning race or tribe, with *cide*, derived from the Latin meaning killing. Lemkin developed the concept of genocide partly in response to the Holocaust, but also in response to previous instances in which he considered the entire nation or ethnic or religious group, had been destroyed such as "the destruction of Carthage; that of religious groups in the wars of Islam and the Crusades; the massacres of the Albigenses and the Waldenses; and more recently, the massacre of the Armenians."[77]

[74] Richard Harris, *Independence and After: Revolutions in Underdeveloped Countries*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962),103.
[75] Harris, *Independence and After: Revolutions in Underdeveloped Countries,*103.
[76] *Independence and After: Revolutions in Underdeveloped Countries,*103.
[77] Raphäel Lemkin, Genocide. *American Scholar*, vol. 15, no. 2, (1946), 227-230.

As per the United Nations definition, genocide encompasses any of the following acts carried out with the intention to annihilate, either wholly or partially, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. These acts include killing members of the group, causing severe bodily or mental harm to its members, intentionally subjecting the group to conditions of life aimed at bringing about its physical destruction in whole or in part, or implementing measures to prevent births within the group, such as forcibly transferring children of the group to another.[78]

This terminology has been reviewed and enriched and even subjected to controversies by social scientists who have shown that all mass murders or massacres are not necessarily genocide,[79] but one can also conceive genocide where there is no murder.[80] Genocide as stated by McCullum is deliberate murder born of the myth that one ethnic group, race or creed is superior to another and that it is thus legitimate to eliminate that 'other' to gain power.[81] According to Calvocoressi, the massacres of the 1994 in Rwanda were the clearest instances of genocide since the adoption in 1948 of the genocide convention by the United Nations (UN). However, some scholars have a number of problems with the UN definition.[82]

When an act is committed with the intention to destroy a group in whole or in part it constitutes genocide and the number of victims does not matter. According to Destexhe, the specificity of genocide does not arise from the extent of the killings.[83] The notion of mass killing is no longer enough to define genocide. It is also argued that genocide may or may not consist of murder.

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[78] Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and genocide in the twentieth century*, (New York: New York University Press), 5.
[79]Ervine Staub, *Roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 8.
80 Sdney Robbins & Shirley Robbins, *Africa, a continent in agony: We accuse*, (Milnerton: Capsal, 2003),151.
[81] Hugh McCullum,*The angels have left us: The Rwanda tragedy and the churches*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications,1995),105.
[82] Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics 1945–2000*, (London: Pearson Education, 2005), 656.
[83] Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and genocide in the twentieth century*, (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 4.

One can conceive of genocide where there is no murder but other acts such as rape and torture which do not kill or cause the deaths of members of a group.[84]

In Rwanda, the social divide between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority was strengthened during the period of Belgian colonialism. The colonial power brought in the concept of two races and ethnic population groups. Every person was registered according to his ethnicity. The Belgians governed the country through the Tutsis who represented the social elite. But following claims for independence from the Tutsis at the end of the 50s, the Belgians turned and supported Hutu rebels against the Tutsis. The Hutu rebellion of 1959 led to thousands of Tutsis being killed and forced hundreds of thousands to flee, the greater part to the neighbouring country Uganda. Some call this "the Hutu Revolution," while others think this was when the genocide against the Tutsis started. In certain periods between 1959 and 1994 Tutsis were systematically discriminated against, and several massacres and expulsions of Tutsis took place.[85]

Over the course of 100 days from 7th April to 16th July 1994, one million slaughtered in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Although the exact figure is unknown, official Rwandan government documents estimate that the number of people killed in the genocide is 1,074,017 of whom 93.7 percent were Tutsi.[86]. Despite an international presence in the form of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), the security force was unable to stop the genocidal killings.[87]

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[84] Robbins & Shirley Robbins, *Africa, a continent in agony: We accuse*, 151.

[85] Prosecuting Genocide in Rwanda. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources nhc-rwa-30sep ( Accessed 20/04/2022)

[86] The UN estimate the number killed as 800,000. The Rwandan Government estimate is1,074,017. RWANDA: No consensus on genocide death toll, *Agence France-Presse*, Apr 6, 2004. An exact figure is contested; see Meierhenrich, J. 2020. "How Many Victims Were There in the Rwandan Genocide? A Statistical Debate". *Journal of Genocide Research*. 22 (1): 72–82 for the recent debate.

[87] Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, (New York: Carrol & Graf Publishers, 2009), 221-250.

### 1.4.2 Genocide Perpetrators

A "perpetrator" is someone who hurt or tried to hurt innocent people on purpose. In Rwanda, this included those who directly attacked civilians or joined groups that did. Some people in Rwanda also joined patrols ordered by the government. If these patrols hurt people, those involved were considered perpetrators. But if they didn't hurt anyone, they weren't. Many people also stole things during the genocide. If they stole and hurt people, they were considered perpetrators. But if they only stole things and didn't hurt anyone, they weren't. The main idea is that a perpetrator is someone who played a part in hurting or trying to hurt innocent people.[88]

The organizers of the genocide exploited a divisive ideology, manipulating Hutu sentiments to instill fear and disdain for the Tutsi population. Subsequently, they utilized governmental institutions to transform these emotions into tangible acts of violence, including hunting, rape, and murder. To make this ideology deadly, leaders needed control over crucial pillars such as the military, government, and political parties to issue and enforce commands. Although propaganda through the radio played a role, it was not effective without the broader command structure.[89] Political leaders and propagandists disseminated misleading concepts to fuel hatred. These included portraying Tutsi as foreign intruders in Rwanda with no right to inhabit the land. Despite the 1959 revolution, false narratives persisted that Tutsi maintained a higher social status and greater wealth than Hutu, supposedly contributing to Hutu poverty. Additionally, Tutsi were wrongly depicted as threats to Hutu, who were portrayed as perpetual victims – be it of Tutsi military power or cunning strategies, such as using women to seduce Hutu or employing their wealth to manipulate them. This distorted narrative propagated the notion that Hutu had the right to defend themselves against perceived threats.[90]

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[88] Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda,*224.

[89] Helen M. Hintjens, Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37(2) (1999), 241-286.

[90] Human Rights Watch and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* , (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 66.

Propagandists utilized publications and then radio to propagate anti-Tutsi views from 1990 until the massacre in 1994. From 1990 through 1994, the last idea that Hutus were endangered and needed to protect themselves, proved to be the most effective in motivating assaults against Tutsi. A study of propaganda strategies may have impacted this concept. A series of mimeographed notes describing tactics of propaganda as examined by a French professor, Roger Mucchielli, in a book entitled *Psychologie de la publicité et de la propagande*, was among papers discovered by Human Rights Watch researchers in a government office shortly after the massacre. Persuading people that the opponent wants to use fear against them is one of the ways listed. If this is done effectively, "honest people" will take whatever steps they believe are required for justifiable self-defense.[91]

When the RPF's initial attack was repulsed and its forces expelled from Rwanda in December 1990, a newly founded propaganda publication, *Kangura*, published an article warning that the RPF was planning a war that "would leave no survivors."[92] At the end of December 1990 all adult men were asked to be prepared to fight as a self-defense force to "provide security" within the country if the army was engaged in conflict at the borders. Soldiers should teach the military to fight using "conventional weapons," they added, because they were less expensive than firearms. A national politician and leader from the northwest released a leaflet two months later, saying that the RPF was planning the annihilation of the Hutu majority.[93]

#### 1.4.2.1 Arming the perpetrators of the genocide

The Genocide that took place in Rwanda between April and July 1994 constituted egregious crimes against humanity. During this period, arms provided to the government were utilized to

[91] Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* 68.
[92] Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* 78.
[93] Association des Femmes Parlementaires pour la Défense des Droits de la Mère et de l'Enfant en collaboration avec Dr. Mugesera Léon, "Toute la Vérité sur la Guerre d'Octobre 1990 au Rwanda," (Kigali : 1991), 5.

perpetrate acts of genocide, involving deliberate and arbitrary killings, as well as other severe violations of human rights. The international community's involvement and support, directly or indirectly, in supplying such arms further underscore the complex ethical dimensions surrounding the tragic events in Rwanda.

Under the leadership of the former Rwandan president, the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) established the Interahamwe in 1992, a private Hutu militia known as "Those who attack together." Alongside another affiliated group, the Impuzamigambi, created by the MRND's coalition partner, the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), these militias played a pivotal role in a systematic campaign of deliberate and arbitrary killings. Their targets included Tutsi civilians and moderate Hutu spokespersons. Operational with support from the Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR) and the Presidential Guard, these militias, led by their commanders, executed a carefully planned and widespread massacre commencing on April 7, 1994. Over a span of three months, this brutal campaign resulted in the tragic loss of over one million lives in Rwanda.[94]

Although the majority of the mass murders which began in Rwanda on 7th April 1994 were carried out using local farming tools such as machetes and hoes, the killings were largely initiated or supervised by members of the security forces who had more sophisticated light weaponry. In most cases when the killers met resistance, they first used grenades and then firearms, including automatic rifles.[95]

Estimates on Rwandan genocide participation vary widely, with claims ranging from thousands to three million perpetrators. Concerning the number Rwandans participated in the 1994

[94]*Arming the perpetrators of the genocide*, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/afr020141995 pdf, (Accessed 26/04/2022).
[95] https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/afr020141995pdf, (Accessed 26/04/2022).

genocide; the existing estimates are hugely discrepant and often not supported with evidence. Some Rwandan government officials claim there were three million perpetrators.[96] Other observers claim there were "hundreds of thousands". Still others estimate tens of thousands.[97] The high-end estimate effectively criminalizes the entire adult Hutu population at the time of the genocide.[98] The low-end estimate is equivalent to a small fraction of the adult male Hutu population.

#### 1.4.2.2 Using Slaughter as an Act of Self-Defense

In January 1994, Human Rights Watch provided evidence of the Rwandan government purchasing small arms. The payment involved a combination of cash and a commitment to use the future harvest from the Mulindi Tea Plantation.[99] The report states that the regime was distributing weapons among the population, thereby using the Rwandan administrative organization as part of a so called civilian self-defence programme. For instance, in August 1991, the chief of staff of the Rwandan army, proposed to provide a gun for every administrative unit of ten households: At least one person per Nyumba Kumi should be armed.[100] The military authorities at the national as well as the local level prepared themselves to fight an enemy not at the war front, but dispersed among the population. Firearms were handed out to communal councillors, soldiers, army reservists and trained militia.[101]

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[96] Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda*, (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998), 244.
[97]Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 41.
[98]Note that Des Forges also claims there were "tens of thousands" of perpetrators who chose to participate "quickly and easily" (p 2). These are in contrast to "hundreds of thousands" who participated "reluctantly." Jones refers to 25,000 perpetrators as a low-end estimate and 100,000 as a high-end estimate.
[99] Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in,* 18.
[100] Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in*, 27.
[101] Alison Des Forges, The Striking Force: Military and Militia in the Rwandan Genocide, Paper presented at the conference 'Unfolding of Genocide', (Butare, 2003), 23.

### 1.4.2.3 Popular Participation

Rwanda's intricate administrative and political hierarchies, which characterized the country for many years, facilitated genocidal leaders' rapid access to the population but did not ensure universal participation in the slaughter.[102] As authorities exploited popular fears and greed, some readily took up arms, while others hesitated or refused participation, even at the risk of their lives.[103]

Incentives offered by authorities included tangible rewards such as food, drink, intoxicants, fragments of military uniforms, and modest cash payments to unemployed, hungry young men.[104]Cultivators were encouraged to pillage farm animals, crops, and essential building materials, with promises of obtaining the fields left vacant by Tutsi victims.[105]

Entrepreneurs and local elites were lured with promises of houses, vehicles, control of businesses, or coveted items like television sets and computers. This particularly appealed to impoverished youth, constituting nearly 60 percent of Rwanda's population under the age of twenty, many of whom lacked prospects for securing land or employment.[106] The Interahamwe, comprised largely of these young men, emerged as early recruits, trained both in the months leading up to and the days immediately following the genocide.[107]

The authorities' initial targets were men acknowledged or presumed to have ties with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), gradually expanding to include the indiscriminate slaughter of women, children, the elderly, and those generally perceived as apolitical. Communities

[102] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 12.
[103] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, (United States of America: Library of Congress, 1999), 45.
[104] Melvern Linda, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide*, (London, UK: Verso, 2004), 78.
[105] Linda, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 78.
[106] Linda, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 78
[107] Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 12.

exhibited differing readiness levels to kill certain Tutsi individuals, reflecting complex personal relationships and allegiances. Individual Hutu, driven by a selective logic, chose whom to attack based on perceived affiliations or personal considerations, sometimes sparing those linked through family, friendship, or past assistance.[108]

Authorities initially fanned the flames of violence by targeting men who were either openly associated with or easily presumed to have connections with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Subsequently, they broadened their focus, insisting on the ruthless extermination of not only men but also women, children, the elderly, and individuals generally considered apolitical. Just as certain communities displayed a greater readiness to harm specific Tutsi individuals, individual Hutu made choices in whom to assail or spare, extending the same selective logic. Hutu individuals who shielded Tutsi often did so based on familial, friendly, or past assistance ties, but intriguingly, some also extended their protection to strangers, highlighting the complex dynamics at play during the tragic events.[109]

### 1.4.3 Genocide Survivors

A survivor, in a legal context, is an individual who outlives another and inherits an interest in the property that the deceased person possessed. In a broader sense, a survivor is also someone who endures and continues to live through challenging or catastrophic events, such as diseases, wars, or other significant crises. The term "survivorship" stems from the concept of survivors, denoting individuals who persist and remain alive after others have succumbed, especially in the aftermath of war or attacks, signifying the state or condition of those who endure when others perish.[110] Genocide survivor refers to any individual, irrespective of his/her 'ethnic' or 'group' background, who, in one way or another, was either injured, hunted, or targeted by

[108] Linda, *Conspiracy to Murder,* 45.
[109] Linda, *Conspiracy to Murder,* 45.
[110]Joseph Mukasa Niyigenga, *The impact of Violence against Genocide Survivors on Human Development of Survivors and Perpetrators*. ttps:// WWW. Academia.edu/ 24713474, (Accessed 27/04/2022).

genocidal acts.[111] The disabled, the indigent and the elderly as well as other vulnerable groups are considered as genocide survivors in Rwanda after the genocide committed from October 1st, 1990 to December 31st, 1994,[112]

Amidst the 1994 Genocide, numerous Tutsi individuals, along with Hutu associated with them, valiantly struggled to preserve their lives. Tens of thousands sought refuge in neighboring countries, while others concealed themselves within Rwanda, finding shelter in ceilings of houses, subterranean holes, forests, and swamps. Survival took diverse forms, with some securing their lives through a singular transaction, while others endured weeks of uncertainty, repeatedly paying with either monetary resources or offering sexual bribes for safety. The resilience of many surviving Tutsi owes itself to the actions of Hutu individuals, whether manifested through a singular act of bravery by a stranger or sustained efforts involving the provision of food and protection over an extended period by friends or family members.[113]

Since 1994, reports on genocide survivors typically highlight four primary groups of victims: orphans (imfubyi), widows (abapfakazi), the traumatized (abahungabanye), and the disabled (abamugaye). While extensive research has been conducted on the first three groups, the last category has not received as much attention, leading to a scarcity of accurate statistics. Various censuses aimed at documenting genocide survivors have been carried out since 1994, including those conducted in 1998 by the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture, and Vocational Training (MIJESCAFO), in 2008 by the Ministry of Local Government, Good Governance, and Social Affairs (MINALOC), and by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. [114]

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[111] Ezekiel Sentama, *Peacebuilding in post-Genocide Rwanda: An exploration of the role of cooperatives in the restoration of interpersonal relationships*, PhDThesis, (Göteborg: Gothenburg University, 2009),6-7.
[112] Rwandan Constitution, 2003, article 14.
[113] Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 10.
[114]Remi Korman, When the bory is forgottern: The physical consequances of genocide for the survivors in *Revisionisme et negationisme* (2016), 8.

Numerous organizations, both within and outside Rwanda, have emerged since 1994 to address the needs of genocide survivors. Their efforts encompass a wide range of support, including aiding victims in seeking justice through local, national, or international legal processes, offering financial assistance, providing medical and psychological support, and managing orphanages and youth employment programs in Rwanda. The aftermath of the genocide saw an alarming number of women, between 250,000 and 500,000, being subjected to sexual violence during the 100 days of brutality. Up to 20,000 children were born as a result of these assaults, and many women and men suffered injuries, mutilation, or death, enduring shootings, stabbings, or genital mutilation. [115]

Child survivors faced unimaginable challenges, being discovered hiding among corpses, in cupboards, or in bushes. The Rwandan National Trauma Survey reveals alarming statistics, with 96% of children witnessing violence, 80% losing family members, 69% witnessing death or harm, 31% observing rape, and 91% believing they would die. Some children were miraculously rescued from piles of corpses or found wandering alone through deserted streets. Rwanda's Ministry of Social Affairs estimates that 106,587 children survived the genocide, while UNICEF suggests that 95,000 children were orphaned by the atrocities, with many of them sustaining severe injuries.[116]

### 1.5 Traditional Court

Traditional justice institutions are increasingly being recognized as an important tool for implementing transitional justice.[117] Other names used to describe traditional systems of justice include customary, informal, community-based, grassroots, indigenous, and local. In Rwanda,

115 The United Nations Special Reporters of the Commission on Human Rights on Rwanda; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/1 (28/04/2022).
116 Readers Digest, *Survivors against the Odds*, https://3l8c4w1xeg053utxpp3we7qc wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content (Accessed 28/04/2022).
117 Anna Triponel. & Stephen Pearson, What do you think should happen? Public participation in transitional justice. *Pace International Law Review*, *22*(1) (2010), 103-144.

traditional courts are referred to as *gacaca*. In Kinyarwanda, the word *gacaca* means grass. The *gacaca* was traditionally an informal and temporary open-air technique for resolving conflicts between members of the same or separate lineages. The whole male population of the community was present. The goal of the procedure was to bring people together. There was no mention of a legal code. Blood crimes were not discussed; only petty crimes and property issues were.

Other African countries, particularly South Africa, had similar dispute settlement procedures that went by different names.[118] Their attractiveness stems from their propensity to connect more strongly with local populations, making them more effective in repairing communal bonds and delivering a feeling of justice. Local populations are more familiar with them, and they allow local circumstances to be incorporated into transitional justice processes. They can also be easier and faster to implement.[119]

Since Rwanda's *gacaca* community courts were established, the focus on traditional justice has grown. The Rwandan government gave the population a substantial say in who would carry out the conventional justice system. Judges were chosen from among the people who lived in the area where they held authority, as is customary in *gacaca* courts.[120] The Community Reconciliation Process was implemented as a smaller-scale grass-roots traditional justice process with the goal of reintegrating those who had done less significant detrimental acts during the political crises back into their communities. This entailed a series of community-based hearings to evaluate how culprits could be reintegrated, such as through community service.[121]

[118] Charles Ntampaka. Le retour â la tradition dans le reglement des différends: Le *gacaca* du Rwanda. *Dialogue* (1995), 95-105.
[119] Tim, Allen & Anna, Macdonald. *Post-conflict traditional justice: A critical overview*, (London: LSE, 2013), 15.
[120] Tim, *Post-conflict traditional justice,15.*
[121] Tim, *Post-conflict traditional justice,15.*

### 1.5.1 Historical Overview of Traditional Courts in Rwanda

In order to meet enormous burden of addressing genocide cases, Rwandan authorities supplemented the mainstream legal system with an old form of conflict resolution known as the *Gacaca,*[122] which had previously been utilized to resolve community conflicts and restore social peace and harmony. According to an Organic Law enacted on January 26, 2001, the jurisdiction of the *Gacaca* include "Considering the necessity, in order to achieve reconciliation and justice in Rwanda, to eradicate for good the culture of impunity and to adopt provisions enabling to ensure prosecutions and trials of perpetrators and accomplices without only aiming for simple punishment, but also for the reconstitution of the Rwandan society made decaying by bad leaders who prompted the population to exterminate one another."[123]

The actual breakthrough was entrusting elected judges with the duty of judging persons accused of genocide and crimes against humanity between October 1, 1990, and December 31, 1994, with the support of the entire nation. Over 254,000 Rwandans of Integrity were elected on the basis of their honesty between the 4th and 7th of October 2001.[124] The *Gacaca* jurisdictions were established at the administrative levels of the Sector and Cell. Each Cell has a *Gacaca* jurisdiction, and each Sector has a *Gacaca* jurisdiction. There is also a *Gacaca* jurisdiction for appeals. Only property cases are heard by Cell *Gacaca* courts, and their verdicts are not appealable.[125]

[122] Gacaca: Literally, "grass"; the Gacaca is a traditional conflict resolution system for neighbourhood disputes. By extension, it is the name given to new peoples' courts charged since 2005 with ruling on cases arising from the genocide. Their competence extends to passing judgement on the perpetrators of genocide crimes and other crimes against humanity in categories 2 and 3.
[123] Law of the 26th January 2001 establishing the Gacaca jurisdictions.
[124] The criteria Article 14 of Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19/6/2004 establishing the organisation, competence and functioning of Gacaca courts, that reiterates on this point the terms of the repealed 2001 Organic Law
[125] Article 3 of Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19th June 2004.

The organizational structure of the Gacaca courts is as follows: a Cell Gacaca court comprises a general assembly, a Gacaca court seat, and a coordination committee. Sector courts and the Court of Appeal are similarly structured, consisting of a general assembly, a seat, and a coordination committee. The Cell General Assembly consists of all residents of that cell aged 18 and above. The seats within Cell Gacaca jurisdictions, those constituting the Sector, the Sector Gacaca court, and the Gacaca Court of Appeal form the Sector general assemblies. Each seat is occupied by nine trustworthy individuals with access to five deputies.[126]

The legal framework established by the Organic Law of August 30, 1996, categorized genocide perpetrators into four groups based on their role in the planning and execution of the 1994 tragedy. Subsequently, an Organic Law enacted on June 19, 2004, refined and consolidated these categories into three. The law also introduced mechanisms for confessions, guilty pleas, excuses, and repentance procedures, which, if accepted, result in a 50% reduction in the sentence, converted into community service labor. For property offenses, the law deems civil compensation as the appropriate recourse.

The Gacaca jurisdictions formally commenced their operations on June 18, 2002. The following day, on June 19, 2002, an information-gathering process kicked off in the twelve Sectors of the Provinces and the city of Kigali. During these sessions, three types of information were collected: details about genocide preparations within each Cell, the execution of genocide and its impact within the Cell, and the specific involvement of each accused person. The subsequent phase involves compiling a list of those who have been charged, categorizing them into different groups, and preparing their case files or defendant's forms.[127] During this period,

[126] Article 6 of Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19th June 2004.
[127] Article,13 of Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19th June 2004.

some individuals were already in prison, while others had been released. Simultaneously, there were those who remained in their homes, yet to undergo the legal proceedings.

In November 2002, 751 Cell *Gacaca* jurisdictions in 118 Sectors around the country began prosecuting cases as part of the pilot phase of the process. From January 2005, data collection was expanded across the entire country in 8,262 Cell *Gacaca* jurisdictions, accounting for 92 percent of the total of 9,013 Cell *Gacaca* jurisdictions. The case files of people accused of first-category crimes were transferred to provincial and city courts in Kigali; those accused of second-category crimes were sent to Sector level *Gacaca* jurisdictions; and those accused of third-category crimes were transferred to Cell *Gacaca* courts. On March 10, 2005, the trials began with the cases that had been transferred during the pilot phase, and on July 15, 2006, they were expanded to the entire country.[128]

Organic Law No. 16/2004, enacted on June 19, 2004, was changed by Organic Law No. 10/2007, enacted on March 1, 2007, to address the necessity for timeliness in deciding instances involving genocide. This statute declared in its first chapter that a jurisdiction may have multiple seats if necessary. As a result, the number of Sector *Gacaca* jurisdiction seats was doubled, with 3,348 sector jurisdictions and 1,957 appeals jurisdictions going into effect on that date. At the same time, categories 1 and 2 were drastically revised. The second category was expanded to include high-profile killers, torturers, and those who degraded the dead bodies of victims, in addition to the perpetrators previously included in the first. Because they fell under the first category of offences, they had previously been tried in regular courts. They were now to be tried in Sector *Gacaca* courts, whose remit had been significantly extended by narrowing the scope of category 1 and broadening the scope of category .[129]

[128] Article,13 of Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19th June 2004.
[129] Article,13 of Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19th June 2004.

The *Gacaca* established to rule on issues originating from the genocide is not the same as the original. The new institution looks more like a proper criminal court with a retributive remit, whereas the old *Gacaca* was a community meeting with the power to arbitrate and organize their own functioning at a local level; this is in stark contrast to the conciliatory nature of traditional *Gacaca* assembly decisions.[130]

The new institution is a state-run system that is repressive in nature yet appeals to the entire public for assistance. In this sense, the ancient institution is practically devoid of substance, save for its local and participative aspect. Using the *Gacaca* courts achieves a number of objectives, including expediting the judicial process, exposing the truth about the genocide, punishing perpetrators, and promoting Rwandan reconciliation.

### 1.5.2 Judges in *Gacaca* jurisdiction

One of the first *gacaca* activities during the pilot phase was the election of nineteen *Inyangamugayo* or judges. The local population at both the cellule and district level elected the judges who generally represented the various socio-economic backgrounds of the inhabitants, with women constituting the overwhelming majority of those who stood for election.[131] The population participated massively in the election of the judges - participation at the cellule level ranged from 65%-95%, at the sector and district levels, it was consistently above 95%.[132]

The successful applicants had to participate in six days of training aimed at helping them to understand the *gacaca* process, their role in it, as well as basic legal principles. In addition to

[130] Charles Ntampaka, Rwandan Gacaca, participative, repressive justice OLR in *Penal Research international, The guilty plea procedure* , (2001), 13.
[131] Ligue Rwandaise pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme (Liprodhor), *Juridictions Gacaca, Potentialités et Lacunes Révéelées par les Debuts,* Rapport du Centre de documentation et d'information sur les proces de genocide (CDIPG), (Kigali, 2003), 16.
[132] *Ligue Rwandaise pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme,*16.

the fact that many judges complained that they were not being compensated with a per diem for time thus spent, it was also generally agreed that the six-day training session was insufficient to allow the judges to acquire the skills they needed to effectively manage the *gacaca* process.[133]

In the meetings, which have to be held at least once a week, every Rwandan citizen has the duty to participate, and refusing to testify is labelled a criminal offence. The hearings take place according to a strict schedule, with specific meetings dedicated to issues as establishing who lived in the cell at the time of the genocide, who were killed in- and outside the cell, who were the victims (defined as people who were killed, hunted to be killed but survived, suffered acts of torture against their sexual organs, suffered rape or harassed in another way or whose house or property were plundered or destroyed because of their ethnic background or opinion on the genocide ideology) and, in a next meeting, their killers, who stand accused and how they are to be categorized.[134]

Every hearing, whether at cell, sector or appeal level is strictly organized as well, and while the general principle is that "*gacaca* courts have competences similar to ordinary courts" it seems as though the hearings are even more proceduralized than their official counterparts. For instance, hearings on offences against property have to proceed along 16 predetermined steps, with specific instructions for the *gacaca* president, the household representatives, the defendants, the secretary of the court and other parties to the trial.[135]

In general, observers agree that the pilot phase of the *gacaca* tribunals was absolutely necessary to determine the positive and negative aspects of the process as well as what needed to be

[133]*The Gacaca Process: Eradicating the culture of impunity in Rwanda,* https: media.africaportal.org/documents 050805RWANDA.pdf (accessed 2/05/2022).
**[134]** Oomen Barbara, Rwanda's gacaca: Objectives, merits and their relation to supranational criminal law, *Research Gate*, 2016,11.
[135] Barbara, *Rwanda's gacaca*,11.

changed, streamlined or eliminated. As part of the improvement of the process, the government set up a new national body to administer the *gacaca* process. In early 2004, the DJG (Departement des Jurisdictions *Gacaca*), the government body responsible for the *gacaca* courts, was replaced by the SNJG (Service Nationale de Jurisdiction *Gacaca*). The SNJG continues to depend on the ministry of justice - the DJG constituted the Sixth chamber of the Supreme Court. However, in the interest of rendering it more efficient, it was given autonomy over its own financial and administrative management.[136]

### 1.5.3 Role of *Gacaca* jurisdiction

Gacaca is the traditional reconciliatory justice adopted by the Government of Rwanda to handle some categories of genocide cases. It is based on the traditional practice of community conflict resolution carried out openly with the participation of the whole community. Being inspired by the Rwandan traditional culture of an informal system of justice, where people used to sit together in *agacaca* (grass) and settle their disputes, the *gacaca* jurisdiction (court or tribunal) was established in 2001 in the wake of the 1994 genocide.[137]

The system was judged necessary in order to establish the truth‘ and eliminate the culture of impunity‘, while speeding up the process around those who were being detained on genocide charges, thus overcoming the chronic problem of the overcrowded prisons and delays in trying those accused (more than 200,000 people were imprisoned). *Gacaca* jurisdictions were charged with hearing cases of crimes of genocide and other crimes against humanity committed between October 1, 1990 and December 31, 1994. The main objectives of the system were the reconstruction of what happened during the genocide; the speeding up of the legal proceedings

[136] Penal Reform International, From Camp to Hill, The reintegration of released prisoners, Research Report on the Gacaca, Report IV, May 2004, 4.
[137] Sentama, *Peacebuilding in post-Genocide Rwanda*, 53.

by using as many courts as possible; and the reconciliation of all Rwandans, and building their unity.[138]

Almost 1.5 million cases had been tried since *Gacaca's* enactment in 2001. A total of 1,245,000 cases have been tried through *Gacaca* courts. The *Gacaca* system has expedited the judicial process. Prior to the *Gacaca* courts only 6,000 cases were tried in a span of just three years (52 cases tried by the ICTR in 17 years) Community service (TIG) carried out are valuable to Rwf 40 billion. Closed on June 18, 2012, *Gacaca* courts tried as many as 1,951,388 Genocide suspects over one decade.[139]

### 1.6 Unity and Reconciliations in Rwanda

Since the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the government of Rwanda has made attempts to establish a strategic direction for the country's long-term peace and socio-economic development. The government has implemented a variety of policies and methods aimed at encouraging unity and social cohesion, as well as ensuring that Rwandans are treated equally regardless of their differences. Peace, security, unity, and reconciliation are all vital pillars of Rwanda's development, according to the country's constitution.[140]

The core of Rwandan reconciliation is redefining Rwandan identity and creating a common sense of Rwandans.[141] Rwanda's model of unity and reconciliation is national in scope and looks at both past and future. It's the transition from a fragmented past to a shared present and

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[138] Sentama, *Peacebuilding in post-Genocide Rwanda*,54.

[139] *Republic of Rwanda, National unity and reconciliation commission: Unity and Reconciliation process*, (Kigali: NURC, 2016), 122. See Also, Republic of Rwanda/Office of the Prime Minister. *Home Grown Initiatives*. Presentation during the 9th National Dialogue Council, 15-16 December 2011, Presentation prepared MINALOC; PRESIREP; RGB; NURC.

[140] International Alert. *Unity and reconciliation in Rwanda: A look at policy implications vis-à-vis social cohesion*,https://www.international-alert.org/publications/unity-and-reconciliation-rwanda, (Accessed 13/4/2022).

[141] NURC, *15 Years of Unity and Reconciliation process in Rwanda: The ground covered to-date*, (Kigali, 2009), 5.

future in which a society finds itself.[142] The following principles must be adhered to in order to achieve unity and reconciliation.[143]

> To foster the sense of Rwandan nationality and prioritize national interests over ethnic, gender, religious, and regional preferences; To resist genocide and its ideology, and to work toward the establishment of a nation based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. To combat any form of divisionism and discrimination, and promote interdependence and synergy in nation building; To multiply strive to heal one another‘s physical and psychological wounds while building future interpersonal trust based on truth telling, repentance and forgiveness; To commemorate the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi with the aim of making ―Never Again as a reality; and to strive for self-determination and passion for work.[144]

### 1.6.1 Unity in Rwanda

Life in pre-colonial Rwanda was characterized by a shared religion which was the belief in the Supreme Being, the Creator and respecting ancestors while appeasing their spirits. These beliefs, among many others, implied the Unity of life, or vital life in horizontal and vertical relationships in which each person relates to descendants, family, ancestors, the cosmos and God. This understanding of life was more than empirical; it started before birth and extended beyond the grave. It was a participatory life because members of a family clan knew that they lived not just for themselves but also for their community, participating in the sacred life of the ancestors and preparing one‘s future life through their descendants. This community of life was managed by a relational harmony.[145] Rwandans were also united by the shared land, on which they always lived together, side by side[146]

Rwandans in their culture believed that togetherness equalled strength, and that in order to survive, they needed each other's help without discrimination, solidarity by 'working together.' This was Rwanda's traditional attitude of mutual solidarity and aid, which was reflected in a

[142] Mani Rama, *Rebuilding and Inclusive Political Community after War*, (Geneva: Sage Publication, 2005), 11.
[143] Rama, *Rebuilding and Inclusive Political Community after War*,12.
[144] Rama, *Rebuilding and Inclusive Political Community after War*,11.
[145]Tharcisse Gatwa , *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1990-1994,* (Eugene Oregon: Regnum Books International, 2005),13.
[146]Servillien Sebasoni , *Les Origines du Rwanda*. Collection « Points de vue », (Paris: L’harmattan, 2000), 32.

number of village-level collective activities. People worked together to construct buildings, clear bushes, and plough land for crop production. Efforts were also pooled to defend themselves against shared foes, and people generally came to each other's aid in happy and sorrowful times. It was discovered that the spirit of mutual aid was firmly embedded in the society's traditions and practices. Rwandan society remained intact and lively as a result of this unity.[147]

In Rwanda, unity, like "solidarity", has long been viewed as a source of strength. The emphasis is on national unity, as shown in the concept of 'Rwandanness' (Ubunyarwanda), which unites Rwandans and serves as their primary identity.

The aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi was therefore faced with a huge challenge to reunite and reconcile Rwandans, who were in total trauma and distress.[148] Restoring trust in the authorities and, in particular, rehabilitating the image of the police and the army, which had taken part in the killings under the previous regime, would be no mean feat. The overall challenge was thus how to rebuild the socio-economic, cultural and institutional fabric, restore security, provide justice, and bring about Reconciliation and Unity in a devastated country made up the wounded, disunited and traumatized people.[149]

To address this dark past of Rwanda, and the consequent legacy and challenges, toward a new and bright society, the restoration of national Unity and Reconciliation was thus vital.[150]The Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front had agreed in Articles 2 and 3 of the Peace Agreement:

> National unity implies that the Rwandan people, as constituent elements of the Rwandan nation, are one and indivisible. National unity entails the rejection of all

[147] Minaloc & Minecofin. *Ubudehe to fight poverty*, (Kigali, 2002), 1.
[148] NURC,10.
[149] Marco Longari, The liberation‖ In *Paul Kagame and the Resilience of a people,(AFP*: Jaguar Editions, 2010), 49.
[150] Longari, *The liberation*, 49.

> exclusions and any form of discrimination based notably on ethnicity, regions, sex and religion. It also entails that all citizens have equal opportunity of access to all the political, economic and other advantages, which access must be guaranteed by the State.[151]

The concept depicts Rwandans prior to colonization and how they established their relationships with their homeland. This is consistent with Erickson's definition of identity as a subjective sense as well as an observable feature of personal sameness and continuity of a shared picture.[152] The Government of National Unity's inaugural leadership Forum for discussion (National Consultative of May 9th, 1998) at Urugwiro Village came to the conclusion that national unity, which refers to national coherence, means:

> Relationship linking fellow-countrymen who feel they have a sense of their common goal, who share a common destiny; who belong to the same country and understands that no-one has more right to it than the other (to the point of chasing others out of it), and who consider that anything that threatens the security of part of their country is in fact endangering the whole of it, and that they must stand up and fight it together.[153]

Citizens must understand that they all share the country; everyone feeling that the country is his/hers, and feeling and accepting that the country is also for other citizens, and that s/he has no more right on it than other citizens; citizens must understand that they must defend their country together, so that no one else can disturb it; citizens must understand that they must defend their country together, so that no one else can disturb it. If one portion of the country is disturbed, citizens from other areas of the country should feel compelled to support individuals in the troubled area and safeguard the country's integrity as a whole. They must have elements in common through which they all perceive themselves (national symbols).[154]

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[151] Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front on the Rule of Law, Arusha, 18 August 1992.
[152] NURC, (2007),50.
[153] NURC. *Report on the National Summit of Unity and Reconciliation*, (Kigali, 2000), 24.
[154] Republic of Rwanda. *Report on the Reflection Meeting held in the Office of the President of the Republic*, May 1998 to March 1999, Kigali: Office of the President of the Republic. (Kigali, 1999), 16.

The essential idea of national unity is also stated in the National Constitution.[155] The Rwandan approach to unification is theoretically based on 'a bond in difference. Pluralism in politics refers to a wide range of agreement and social cohesion, as well as adaptation and accommodation among Rwandans and the creation of an integrated central value system. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) believes that unity is a traditional value and a basic principle acquired from the ancestors, and that it must be reasserted, strengthened, and taught to all Rwandans. The NURC highlights that the former characteristics of Rwandan unity were expressed in the following principles:

> To agree that all citizens are Rwandans, belonging to and sharing the same ancestral land, 'Rwanda'; To see themselves as one people dependent on the same administrative entity that treats them equally (The Umwami or King was the unifying knot for Rwandans and was King of all Rwandans); Legal equality in the eyes of the law, with no discrimination or social class categorization of Rwandans. For example, anyone who committed an offence, even if they were a member of the royal family, had to be punished as an example to others in proportion to the nature and degree of the offence; Only people's own abilities and competencies were considered in all affairs, at all levels; The Rwanda traditional culture inherited from their ancestors (rites, customs, folklore, human and animal medicines, etc…); was that they had to depend on one another.[156]

It is important to note that a country can be united even if its residents do not share the same culture, language, or religion. The most important thing for someone to declare that a country has unity is that inhabitants understand and accept that they are sharing that country, that no one can be kept out of it because they all have the same right and feel obligated to build and protect it together.[157]

### 1.6.2 Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Rwanda

Reconciliation is a kind of mutual acceptance by members of former hostile groups. Such acceptance includes positive attitudes and actions that express them as circumstances allow

[155] Republic of Rwanda. *The 2003 Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda as amended to date*, (Kigali, 2004), 178.
[156] NURC. *The 1st National Summit report on Unity and Reconciliation*, (Kigali, 2000), 17.
[157] NURC. *The 1st National Summit report on Unity and Reconciliation,*17.

and require[158] Reconciliation is characterized by a common acknowledgment and acceptance of individuals from previously antagonistic groups. Such acknowledgment incorporates uplifting attitudes and positive activities that express them. Designs and foundations that advance and serve compromise are significant, yet reconciliation should incorporate a changed mental direction toward the other. In cases where reconciliation follows severe violence, a gradual and progressive approach is advisable. [159]

In Rwanda, reconciliation is understood as a process through which Rwanda has to move from a divided past to a shared future, a process that aims to overcome the dehumanizing past towards a humanized present and future, a process that has to do with who Rwandans have to be and become.[160] This understanding also agrees with Galtung and Wallensteen, who contend that reconciliation process is not about forgetting the past or loving the former enemies but rather to co-exist peacefully.[161]

Forgiveness involves letting go of anger and the desire for revenge. It can help in diminishing the pain that results from victimization and in moving away from an identity as a victim. Since forgiveness usually includes the development of a more positive attitude toward the other, reconciliation and forgiveness are clearly connected.[162] Forgiveness includes relinquishing outrage while longing for retribution. It can help in decreasing the torment that comes from exploitation. Pardoning for the most part incorporates the improvement of a more uplifting

[158] Anne Pearlman, Healing, reconciliation, and forgiving after genocide and other collective violence. In R.G. Helmick & R.L. Petersen (Eds.), *Forgiveness and reconciliation: Religion, public policy, and conflict transformation*, (Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001),200.
[159] Pearlman, *Healing, reconciliation, and forgiving after genocide and other collective violence*,204.
[160] David Bloomfield and Teresa Barnes, *Reconciliation after violent conflict: A handbook*, (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2003),12.
[161] Ezechiel Sentama, *Peacebuilding in post-Genocide Rwanda: An exploration of the role of cooperatives in the restoration of interpersonal relationships*, PhD Thesis, (Göteborg: Gothenburg University, 2009), 30.
[162] Michael McCullough, Frank Fincham & Jo-Ann Tsang. Forgiveness, forbearance, and time: The temporal unfolding of transgression–related interpersonal motivations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (2003), 540–557.

attitude toward the other.[163]. It's important to note that understanding the reasons behind an individual or group becoming perpetrators may contribute to acceptance, but this understanding alone may not necessarily lead to forgiveness.

Forgiveness is sometimes portrayed as a change in the person who has been wronged. Reconciliation is intrinsically reciprocal, requiring both parties to change. However, if forgiveness occurs in the optimal way, that is, in response to perpetrators acknowledging what they have done and apologizing for their actions, which has been shown to facilitate forgiveness,[164] it is likely to aid reconciliation and may even be considered a part of it. In cases like genocide or mass killing, where former victims and perpetrators coexist in close proximity, this mutual aspect of forgiveness is crucial for its effectiveness, benefiting survivors and fostering future relationships between groups.

However, forgiveness without the acknowledgment of guilt and expressions of regret, which perpetrators unfortunately often fail to provide, can be detrimental in such situations. This incomplete forgiveness sustains, if not exacerbates, the imbalance in the relationship and may contribute to a sense of impunity. In contrast, constructive forgiveness has the potential to aid in the healing process for all involved parties survivors, perpetrators, and non-violent members of the perpetrator group.[165]

From a situation where neighbours were killing neighbours, religious leaders planning against their congregations with the killers and colleagues murdering colleagues, dialogue between the two camps seems to be hard yet there can never be reconciliation without dialogue.[166] This is

[163] McCullough, *Forgiveness, forbearance, and time*,550.
[164] Robert Bies and Thomas Tripp, Revenge in organizations: The good, the bad, and the ugly. In R.W. Griffin et al. (Eds.) Dysfunctional behaviour in organizations: Violent and deviant behaviour. *Monographs in organizational behaviour and industrial relations*, vol. 23, parts A & B, (Stamford: JAI Press, 1998), 63.
[165] Bies , *Revenge in organizations: The good, the bad, and the ugly*,60.
[166] Lloyd Rhiannon and Kristine Bresser, *Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict: The role of the Church in healing, forgiveness and reconciliation*, (Geneva: Le Rucher/Mercy Ministries,1998), 103.

the reality that faced post conflict Rwanda. In trying to do the impossible, Rwanda has again registered significant successes in bringing the people to discuss the issues that divided them aiming at bringing unity between them.[167]

Dialogue as opposed to the other methods of conflict resolution like negotiations and mediation, helps to bring opposing sides together to devise means for sustainable peace. Whereas in negotiations each party aims at advancing their point of view as the only most appropriate view, in dialogue all views are seen in the same light as alternative constructive ideas on how to achieve the desired goal for peace and unity.[168]

This Rwandan approach offers hope for peace due to the fact that it brings together members of the community at different levels and in different capacities as victims of the genocide, perpetrators, the returnees, community leaders, religious leaders, young and old to discuss the prevailing issues and come up with workable solutions.[169]

The dialogue forums and clubs play a significant role in promoting unity and reconciliation, drawing inspiration from traditional Rwandan dialogue models. Following intense debates and disagreements, members come together to celebrate and calm down.[170]

Post-sessions, they share locally made beer, partake in communal meals, and engage in collective dance. This practice is crucial as it reinforces the shared identity of the participants, emphasizing that unity and reconciliation are not only personal but also integral to their local and national interests.

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[167] Rutayisire Antoine, *Reconciliation not an Option but Mandatory. National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.*www.nurc.gov.rw, (accessed 20/06/2022).
[168] Vanessa Brown Noël, *Reconciliation in Rwanda: Building Peace Through Dialogue, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, (Rabat: George Mason University, 2008), 6.
[169] Brown *Reconciliation in Rwanda, 6.*
[170] Brown , *Reconciliation in Rwanda, 6.*

### 1.7 Recovery after Genocide

Following the RPF triumph, the country transitioned from war to peace, necessitating major economic and technical help to restore the country's shattered fabric. Rebuilding the social, political, and economic structure of a war-torn state or society, on the other hand, is always a complicated task that necessitates comprehensive national and international solutions. Conflict ruins State's and people's output, thus it is evident that conflict States will not be able to support their quick rehabilitation or reconstruction.[171] As a result, efforts from a variety of stakeholders are important at this point in the recovery process.

#### 1.7.1 Unveiling the Past

The nation's journey toward reconciliation involves facing its painful history, with perpetrators owning up to their actions, truth-telling, and seeking forgiveness. Healing requires acknowledging past atrocities to prevent their recurrence, despite challenges like persistent genocide ideology and reluctance to disclose facts.[172] Truth telling leads to, or complements, justice in order to transform memory into something concrete, to ensure that it will not recur within the society.[173]

The negative repercussions of Rwanda's contentious past, particularly the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, have left deep wounds and memories that are still fresh in kind for all Rwandans. Bad memories embedded in Rwandan history that culminated in the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi have hampered some Genocide survivors' trust in perpetrators in one way or another.[174]

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[171] Nicole Ball, *The Challenge of Rebuilding War-torn Societies*, (Washington D.C: Overseas Development Council, 1996), 48

[172] David Bloomfield, *The Context of Reconciliation*: *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict*, (Stockholm: IDEA, 2003), 40.

[173] Bloomfield, *The Context of Reconciliation*: *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict*, 14.

[174] Donatilla Mukamana and Petra Brysiewicz, The lived experience of Genocide rape survivors in Rwanda. *In Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 40 (4) (2008), 379-384.

The lengthy history of Genocide ideology that has been, and continues to be, established in some people's minds and emotions has resulted in the far-reaching ramifications and wounds of the Genocide remaining deep and fresh. Some Genocide offenders, for example, have hardened their souls. Some people still believe in Genocide ideology and refuse to accept responsibility for their crimes, thus refusing to tell the truth about where victims' bodies have been thrown, delaying proper burial of Genocide victims.[175]

Survivors often seek the truth of who organized, perpetrated and covered up crimes, and how they were able to do so. Truth after conflict thus concerns people's understanding of what occurred in the past.[176] If societies are to prevent recurrence of past atrocities and to cleanse themselves of the corrosive enduring effects of massive injuries to individuals and whole groups, societies must understand at the deepest possible levels what occurred and why.[177] Truth-telling after genocide remains a process all the more so since there are people who would prefer not to tell the truth for personal reasons: shame, to avoid confrontation with justice, or individuals still with divisive and Genocide ideology.

### 1.7.2 Confession

In post-genocide Rwanda, the government of Rwanda has pursued reconciliation with great determination in the belief that it is the only moral alternative to social challenges. In the first years after the genocide, law was passed and the accused were offered the chance to confess in return for a reduction in punishment, fewer than sixty persons took advantage of the plea-bargaining opportunity. The number increased in 1998, particularly after the first executions. By the end of 1998, about 8,615 people had begun the process of making confessions. Others

[175] NURC, *15 Years of Unity and Reconciliation process in Rwanda: The ground covered to-date*, (2009), 24.
[176] Philip Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, post-Genocide Justice and reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without borders*, (New York: Cambridge University press,2010), 3.
[177] Robert Rotberg, Truth Commissions and Provision of Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, (Princeton: Princeton University press, 2000), 3.

refused to do so, citing mistrust of governmental authorities or fear of reprisals against themselves or members of their families. Some fear reprisals from fellow prisoners because in most prisons those who confess are not separated from the rest of the prison population.[178]

The confession procedure, even if it became widely used by detainees, would not quickly reduce the prison population. Each confession has to be examined by prosecutorial staff to determine its veracity and by judges to determine if the appropriate procedure has been followed. This process demands time and resources, although clearly somewhat less than a trial.[179] When many of those who were pardoned by the president were released, they came back to their villages and once again they found themselves in the same communities as the survivors. This was hard for both survivors and perpetrators. The reconciliation doesn't come from the sky. It comes bit by bit. It means living together, saying sorry, asking for forgiveness. It is much more than words; it is actions.[180]

It is clear that successful Unity and Reconciliation process, after divisions and violence, therefore necessitates, on the one hand, that the perpetrators voluntarily acknowledge their wrongdoings, repent and apologize for these evildoings. On the other hand, it becomes much more beneficial when the survivors 'voluntary forgiveness is also granted toward renewed relationships. This is indeed the approach that Rwanda adopted.

The confession and forgiveness process, is both public and private. Considering the large numbers of perpetrators and survivors involved, there is no doubt that it was necessary for the state to validate and systematise confession and forgiveness as a strategy for restorative justice, which in the peculiar circumstances of post-genocide Rwanda, is necessary for the country to

[178]Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 519.
[179] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 520.
[180] Phil Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without borders*, (New York: Cambridge University press,2010), 112.

move forward. For the transformation that is crucial for socio-economic development to be realised, it was necessary for the state to create the structures for transitional justice, for individual acts of personal forgiveness to become more than isolated occurrences. The power and meaning of these acts (for the wrong-doer, the victim and the community) must be captured by a common narrative. The State therefore has an extremely practical role to play in facilitating and broadcasting acts of personal forgiveness.[181] What emerges from the testimonies of both survivors and perpetrators, is that forgiveness depends not only on the pain and suffering of the perpetrator who is moved to beg for pardon, or to 'make a plea for mercy, but also on the willingness of their victims to show mercy.[182]

There is nothing that speaks to the power of forgiveness like the Reconciliation Village: Perpetrators and victims who came face-to-face during the brutal events of the genocide have chosen to acknowledge the mistakes of the past and commit to living out the future together in peace. They have, in fact, gone beyond forgiveness. They have made a choice not only to move forward, but also to move forward *together* as neighbours and friends. It seems impossible. It is, without God's presence in the hearts and minds of Rwandans. It is God's grace, provision, and amazing love now reflected in the lives of the villagers that make these communities of reconciliation grow and thrive. Reconciliation is the key to restoring Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide.

[181] John D. Inazu, *No future without (personal) forgiveness: Re-examining the role of forgiveness in transitional justice* (2009), 20. http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2740&context=faculty_scholarship (Accessed 30/06/2022).
[182]Miroslav Volf, *The final reconciliation: Reflections on a social dimension of the eschatological transition, Modern Theology*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-0025.00117.(Accessed 30/06/2022).

**Integrative Reflection**

The history of the world has always been punctuated by cycles of violence, regardless of time, region or race. The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was a tragedy in which over one million people were killed. The military authorities at the national as well as the local level prepared themselves to fight an enemy not at the war front, but dispersed among the population. Firearms were handed out to communal councillors, soldiers, army reservists and trained militia. This policy was clearly meant to militarize the rural areas and to draw the rural population into the conflict, however far they lived from the frontline. Ordinary farmers were told to participate in so called self-defence programme with their own farming tools.

During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, up to one million people perished and as many as 250,000 women were raped, leaving the country's population traumatized, its infrastructure decimated, and sending shock waves through the international community. Since then, Rwanda has embarked on an ambitious justice and reconciliation process with the ultimate aim of all Rwandans once again living side by side in peace. In the years following the genocide, more than 120,000 people were detained and accused of bearing criminal responsibility for their participation in the killings. To deal with such an overwhelming number of perpetrators, a judicial response was pursued on three levels: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the national court system of Rwanda, and the *Gacaca* courts.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established by the United Nations Security Council on 8 November 1994. The Tribunal has a mandate to prosecute persons bearing great responsibility for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda between 1 January and 31 December 1994. The first trial started in January 1997, and by December 2011, the Tribunal had completed the trial work of 80 of the 92 accused.

Rwanda's national courts prosecute those accused of planning the genocide or of committing serious atrocities, including rape. By mid-2006, the national courts had tried approximately 10,000 genocide suspects. To address the fact that there were thousands of accused still awaiting trials in the national court system and to bring about justice and reconciliation at the grassroots level, the Rwandan government re-established the traditional community court system called "*Gacaca*", which became fully operational in 2005.

In the *Gacaca* system, communities at the local level elect judges to hear the trials of genocide suspects accused of all crimes except *planning* of genocide. The courts give lower sentences if the person is repentant and seeks reconciliation with the community. Often, confessing prisoners return home without further penalty or receive community service orders. Since 2005, more than 12,000 community-based courts have tried 1.2 million cases throughout the country. The Gacaca trials play a crucial role in fostering reconciliation by offering victims a platform to uncover the truth surrounding the demise of their family members. Simultaneously, these trials afford perpetrators the chance to admit their wrongdoings, express remorse, and seek forgiveness within their community. It's noteworthy that the Gacaca courts are slated to conclude their proceedings on May 4, 2012.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda left all people in Rwanda traumatized by the events. There was great enmity between the victims and perpetrators. This led to a great need for individual and societal trauma healing to promote healing and reconciliation rather than revenge and continued societal conflict. Reconciliation villages played a major role in the restoration of relationships between former genocide perpetrators and survivors of genocide in the aftermath of genocide in Rwanda. Although conflicting parties joined reconciliation village as a way of satisfying their material interests (finding shelter and improving their condition of living), living together impacted them positively. Finding solutions to their common material problems

offered an opportunity for communication and reduced prejudice amongst community members. Additionally, pre-existing fears were overcome and trust and positive communication were fostered.

Contact between conflicting parties was motivated by the common desire to fight against poverty. These problems could not have effectively been addressed unless conflicting parties worked together. In order to achieve common goals through cooperative work individuals from each side of the conflict put aside their problems, and focused on their shared fight against poverty. Putting aside negative-hostile attitudes did not limit communication. On the contrary, community members found an opportunity for discussing and addressing their problems.

Working together enabled conflicting parties to interact, communicate, and advise each other towards a common goal. Acts of solidarity among conflicting parties and family' members reduced prejudice while re-building trust among them. The factor of living together in reconciliation village combined with economic joint activities provided a favourable space in which negative-dehumanizing attitudes were overcome, while positive-re-humanizing attitudes were fostered. In addition to the aforementioned factors of affecting positive change, community members received regular teaching about restorative justice. These teachings impacted most individuals positively.

# CHAPTER TWO: HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

## Introduction

Reconciliation and healing are intertwined human experiences essential for restoring broken relationships and re-establishing peace. They address not only personal conflicts but also emotional, psychological, and social wounds.

This chapter explores reconciliation and healing through philosophical, psychological, anthropological, and religious lenses. Philosophers harmonize conflicting ideas, psychologists repair trauma-induced emotional rifts, and anthropologists study cultural practices that mend social divides. World religions highlight the spiritual dimensions of reconciliation, using rituals to rebuild harmony. Rwandan Tradition Religion aspect examine the context in which healing and reconciliation will be applied.

## 2.1 Philosophers

Philosophers, throughout history, grapple with reconciling opposing viewpoints. They synthesize them to attain a comprehensive understanding of complex concepts and ideologies. They navigate conflicting notions, seeking harmony amid divergent perspectives to forge a coherent framework for philosophical inquiry and societal advancement. In this exploration, we will delve into Hegel's ideas and Julius Kambarage Nyerere's perspectives on reconciliation, shedding light on their distinct philosophical approaches.

### 2.1.1 Hegel

#### 2.1.1.1 Life and Philosophical Legacy

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in 1770 in Stuttgart, Germany. He pursued his education at the University of Tübingen from 1788 to 1793, initially studying philosophy and later shifting his focus to theology. During his time at Tübingen, Hegel formed influential friendships with notable contemporaries, including Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) and

Friedrich von Schelling (1775–1854), both of whom would emerge as prominent figures in German philosophy alongside Hegel. These friendships played a crucial role in shaping Hegel's philosophical perspectives, and their intellectual interactions significantly influenced Hegel's development as a philosopher. The deep connections forged among the three thinkers had a lasting impact on their respective philosophical trajectories.[183]

As the last major exponent of classical German philosophy, Hegel's work stands as a culmination of the philosophical tradition that preceded him, building upon the ideas of Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Friedrich Schelling. Embracing absolute idealism and drawing inspiration from Christian insights, Hegel constructed a comprehensive philosophical system that aimed to encompass every facet of existence ranging from logic to nature, the human, and the divine. His dialectical method involved the interplay of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, continually evolving to higher and more comprehensive forms of understanding. Hegel's profound grasp of diverse knowledge domains allowed him to integrate various elements into his philosophical framework, demonstrating a remarkable synthesis of ideas and perspectives.[184]

#### 2.1.1.2 Hegel's Insights on Reconciliation

Reconciliation, as expounded by Hegel, represents a pivotal concept within his philosophical framework. Central to Hegel's dialectical method is the idea of the 'dialectic of reconciliation,' which underlines the process of overcoming contradictions to reach a higher, integrated state. Hegel's dialectics, characterized by thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, unveils the evolutionary movement where opposing forces encounter each other, leading to a higher form of unity. It is

183 Thomas K Malcolm, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right: A Commentary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 23.
184 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: One-Volume Edition, The Lectures of 1827*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42.

crucial to note that this process is not a mere compromise but a transformative journey that retains the essential aspects of conflicting elements in a new, harmonious configuration.[185]

Hegel posits that reconciliation arises from the inherent conflicts within reality, manifesting across various domains, including individual consciousness, social structures, and historical development. These conflicts serve as the impetus for progress, propelling the dialectical movement toward greater self-awareness and freedom. Hegel emphasizes that the reconciliatory process involves a profound recognition and integration of contradictions rather than their elimination, acknowledging that the tension between opposing elements is essential for development.

> The life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. It is this power, not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away to something else; but it is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it.[186]

For Hegel, reconciliation is not a final destination but an ongoing, dynamic process embedded within the very fabric of existence: "The truth of the spirit is the movement of the spirit, which is the reconciliation of opposites. Only in this movement do the opposites obtain their true nature, and it is in this reconciliation that freedom is realized."[187]

It's a continuous movement toward a higher form of unity that encompasses and transcends the contradictions inherent in the initial opposing elements. This process is integral to the realization of Geist (spirit) in its journey towards self-awareness, culminating in the Absolute a state of complete self-realization and freedom.[188]

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[185] Georg F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 325.
[186] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 325.
[187] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 325.
[188] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 325..

Hegel's theory of social reconciliation elucidates how societal conflicts and contradictions manifest and resolve themselves within the larger framework of history.

> The state is the actuality of the ethical idea. The ethical idea is the unity of the universal and the particular, of the individual and the community. The state is the realization of freedom, the realization of the rational will, in which the individual finds his self-realization, but this is a self-realization through the reconciliation of the particular with the universal, of individuality with universality.[189]

Hegel contends that societal conflicts arise from the clash between opposing forces, such as individual desires and communal norms or competing societal interests. Through the dialectical movement, societies undergo phases of conflict (thesis) and opposition (antithesis), culminating in a synthesis that transcends and reconciles these contradictions. Hegel argues that social reconciliation involves the development of ethical and institutional frameworks that allow conflicting elements to find unity without annihilating their differences.[190]

Furthermore, Hegel's perspective on social reconciliation encompasses a broad historical dimension. The unfolding of social reconciliation occurs within the historical context, where the conflicts and contradictions embedded in societies lead to transformative developments. These developments, be they political, cultural, or economic, propel societies through a series of stages toward a higher form of unity. Hegel's dialectical framework emphasizes that societal evolution involves the constant synthesis of opposing elements, leading to the formation of new structures and norms that reconcile the contradictions within a society.[191]

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[189]**Georg Hegel Wilhelm Friedrich,** *The Philosophy of Right*. Translated by Terry. M. Knox, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 163.
[190] Peter Singer. "Hegel and the Idea of Reconciliation", in *Political Theory* Vol. 20, no. 4 (1992), 660.
191Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 212.

### 2.1.1.4. Challenge of Reconciliation

In Hegelian philosophy, tragedy holds a central role in the dialectical process of reconciliation. According to Hegel, "tragedy exhibits the collision of ethical powers, each of which is justified in itself but which, by virtue of their one-sidedness, come into conflict with one another".[192] Tragedy arises when irreconcilable conflicts culminate in a crisis that disrupts the prevailing order. The truly tragic consists in the self-division and self-destruction of the ethical order itself."[193] Yet, tragedy also becomes a medium for reconciliation, as it leads to a higher synthesis that preserves the essential truths of the conflicting elements.[194] Through this transcendence, Hegel demonstrates that tragedy fosters the advancement of both individual consciousness and societal development.[195]

Moreover, within Hegelian thought, tragedy plays a crucial role in the development of the individual's ethical consciousness. Tragedy, as a manifestation of conflicting moral values and ethical dilemmas, presents a poignant portrayal of human struggle. Hegel suggests that through the experience of tragedy, individuals encounter the clash between ethical principles, thereby deepening their understanding of moral complexities. This confrontation with ethical conflicts, depicted vividly in tragic narratives, contributes to the individual's ethical growth and the maturation of their moral sensibilities.[196]

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[192] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 447.
[193] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Righ*: *Knox translation*, (Oxford: University Press, 1952), 284.
[194] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 453.
[195] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 210.
196 Merold Westphal, *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 176.

### 2.1.2 Julius Kambarage Nyerere

#### 2.1.2.1. Early Life and Presidency

Julius Kambarage Nyerere, an eminent African philosopher, anti-colonial leader, and the first President of Tanzania, was born on April 13, 1922, in Butiama village, Musoma Region, Tanganyika. He hailed from the esteemed Zanaki ethnic community, born into a lineage of royalty as the son of Chief Burito Nyerere. The ancestral home, situated in Butiama in an area known as Mwitongo, held significant cultural significance for his heritage. Initially named Mugendi, symbolizing "Walker" in the Zanaki language, his early identity rooted him in the traditions of his community.[197]

His life vividly portrays Nyerere's formative years, highlighting him as "a first-generation convert of sparkling intelligence."[198] Nyerere's educational journey traversed from local primary school to Tabora Tanzania, then Makerere Uganda culminating in his enrollment at the University of Edinburgh in October 1949, marking a trajectory of academic excellence and determination.[199]

Tanzania gained its independence in 1961 as Tanganyika under the leadership of Julius Nyerere. In 1964, Tanganyika united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania, marking a significant step towards national unity. Nyerere's presidency, which spanned from 1964 to 1985, marked a transformative era in Tanzania's history. Even before independence, Nyerere had entered politics in the 1950s as a member of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), advocating for self-governance and African liberation. Post-independence, he steered the nation towards a path of self-reliance through the implementation of African Socialism, encapsulated in the transformative Arusha Declaration of 1967. As a staunch anti-

[197]Innocent Simon Sanga , "Julius Nyerere's Understanding of African Socialism, Human Rights and Equality Rights and Equality", in *The Journal of Social Encouters,* Vol 4, no. 1,(2020),110.
[198] John Illiffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge university press,1979),508.
[199] Illiffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*,508.

colonial figure, Nyerere consistently referenced international human rights standards, notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to upholding human dignity both during his presidency and in his post-presidential endeavors.[200]

### 2.1.2.2. Reconciliation and Healing through Ujamaa Policy

Nyerere's political ethics were not limited to Tanzania; his influence extended across Africa. His efforts in mediating conflicts, such as his involvement in ending Idi Amin's dictatorship, demonstrate his role in regional reconciliation and healing. Although *Ujamaa* was not universally accepted, Nyerere's diplomatic strategies highlight his broader commitment to peace and reconciliation, which is relevant to Rwanda.[201] Nyerere often emphasized the importance of national unity and reconciliation, stating: "Without unity, there is no future for Africa."[202] This belief guided his actions in fostering reconciliation and solidarity, both within Tanzania and across the continent.

Nyerere's political philosophy was deeply rooted in the values of brotherhood and equality. He famously said, "*Binadamu wote ni ndugu, na Afrika ni moja*, referring to universal brotherhood of all human beings and African unity."[203] This guiding principle underpinned his vision of reconciliation and healing, encouraging communities to transcend tribalism and work together as one family.[204]

Reflecting on his vision for social justice, Nyerere declared: "We, the people of Tanzania, would like to light a candle and put it on top of Mount Kilimanjaro, which would shine beyond

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[200] Sanga, Julius Nyerere's Understanding of African Socialism, Human Rights and Equality Rights and Equality", in *The Journal of Social Encouters,* Vol 4, no. 1,(2020),1.
[201]Paul Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation: Julius Nyerere and the Establishment of Sovereignty in Tanzania, 1960–1964* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2017), 204.
[202] Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity: Uhuru na Umoja* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 15.
[203] Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 3.
[204] John K. Mwami, "Julius Nyerere's Philosophy of Brotherhood," *African Studies Journal* (Nairobi: African Scholars Press, 1996), 48.

our borders, giving hope where there is despair, love where there is hatred, and dignity where before there was only humiliation."[205] This aspiration for collective well-being resonated with Rwanda's post-genocide rebuilding efforts, as it highlighted the importance of promoting hope, dignity, and mutual respect. During the process of integrating Zanzibar into Tanzania after the 1964 revolution, Nyerere highlighted the importance of dialogue and unity, saying: "Our union is not perfect, but it is an example to others that political differences can be reconciled through mutual respect and understanding."[206]

TANU's declaration promotes unity and reconciliation, affirming equality, dignity, justice, and collective responsibility to build a harmonious, classless society. Whereas TANU believes:

> (a) That all human beings are equal; (b) That every individual has a right to dignity and respect; (c) That every citizen is an integral part of the nation and has the right to take an equal part in Government at local, regional and national level; (d) That every citizen has the right to freedom of expression, of movement, of religious belief and of association within the context of the law; (e) That every individual has the right to receive from society protection of his life and of property held according to law; (f) That every individual has the right to receive a just return for his labour; (g) That all citizens together possess all the natural resources of the country in trust for their descendants; (h) That in order to ensure economic justice the state must have effective control over the principal means of production; and (i) That it is the responsibility of the state to intervene actively in the economic life of the nation so as to ensure the well-being of all citizens, and so as to prevent the exploitation of one person by another or one group by another, and so as to prevent the accumulation of wealth to an extent which is inconsistent with the existence of a classless society.[207]

His emphasis on collective responsibility and shared prosperity offers lessons for healing the divisions caused by conflicts, such as the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.

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[205] Nyerere, *The Arusha Declaration* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1967), 7.
[206] John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 396.
[207] Nyerere, *The Arusha Declaration*, (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1967), 1: On February 5, 1967, President Julius Nyerere, under the leadership of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), announced the Arusha Declaration. It outlined Ujamaa (African Socialism) as a framework for Tanzania's development, emphasizing self-reliance, equality, and communal cooperation to guide the nation's economy and promote a classless, unified society.

Nyerere's leadership and mediation efforts extended beyond Tanzania. Regarding his role in resolving Uganda's crisis under Idi Amin, he remarked: "Africa cannot stand by while one of its own descends into chaos. Our responsibility is to our brothers and sisters."[208] This approach reflects his commitment to regional peace and reconciliation, which resonates with Rwanda's post-genocide journey.

#### 2.1.2.3. Conflict Resolution through Diplomacy

Nyerere was involved in regional diplomacy and conflict resolution. He played a role in mediating conflicts in the region, such as the Uganda-Tanzania War in 1978–1979, where Tanzania intervened to overthrow the oppressive regime of Idi Amin.

Internationally, Nyerere was respected for his intelligence, eloquence, vision, and determination, although his Ujamaa program received silent opposition in neighboring countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, which had opted for liberal capitalism. These capitalistic neighbors, supported by outside powers, sabotaged the realization of the brotherhood based on Ujamaa and contentment of justice, peaceful, and harmonious relationships. In this Ujamaa manifesto, which Nyerere followed to the letter, it is written that "the government is by the people, of the people, and for the people."[209]

Onwubiko Oliver interpreted this kind of community aspiration as a "we" civic or ecclesial government: "It is a people's government or people's church. The Ujamaa manifesto meant everything in Tanzania: there was to be no room for vices like injustices, war, corruption, hatred, tribalism, and religious fundamentalism."[210] Everything was to be done in communion with all the members of the family, the regional council, and the government. Decisions were

[208] Paul Bjerk, *Building a Peaceful Nation,* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2017), 246.
[209] Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism,* 4.
[210] Olivier Onwubiko, *African Palaver: The Path to Conflict Resolution,* (Owerri: Edu-Edy Publications, 2001), 56.

made through consensus in a community palaver, and in case of any conflict, they were amicably resolved and reconciled through the palaver model.

Nyerere referred frequently to the repression and injustices of colonial rule as derogations from basic human dignity and fundamental human rights. He stated, "our struggle, will always be a struggle for human rights...Our position is based on the belief in the equality of human beings, in their rights and duties as citizens."[211]

Nyerere played a pivotal role in Burundi's peace and reconciliation efforts during the nation's protracted civil war. After stepping down from the Tanzanian presidency in 1985, he committed himself to promoting peace in the region. His involvement in Burundi began in earnest in the mid-1990s when he was chosen as the mediator for the peace talks between the warring factions.

Nyerere believed that sustainable peace could only be achieved through inclusive dialogue and mutual understanding. He once remarked, "Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is the presence of justice, equality, and mutual respect."[212]This philosophy guided his approach to mediating the Burundi crisis, where ethnic tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi had escalated into a deadly conflict.

In the negotiations, Nyerere emphasized the importance of addressing both the historical grievances and the structural inequalities that fueled the conflict. He facilitated a series of peace talks that brought together leaders from the conflicting parties, urging them to prioritize the

[211] Bonny Ibhawoh, *Human Rights in Africa,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 98.
[212] Julius K. Nyerere, quoted in Henry Mutebi, *Peacemaking in Africa: The Legacy of Julius Nyerere* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2000), 112.

welfare of the Burundian people. “You cannot achieve peace if you negotiate for your interests rather than for the people you represent,” Nyerere told the delegates.[213]

Nyerere’s tireless efforts laid the groundwork for the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which was finalized in 2000 after his death. His commitment to the process earned him widespread respect as a mediator, with many Burundians viewing him as a neutral and principled figure.

### 2.2 Psychologists

Psychologists delve into the multifaceted realms of reconciliation, aiming not only to mend psychological schisms but also to facilitate holistic healing, addressing the intricate interplay between trauma, identity, and interpersonal relations. Understanding the contributions of Judith Lewis Herman and Carl Rogers allows us to grasp the nuanced psychological approaches they advocate for reconciliation, encompassing trauma healing, empathetic connection, and the restoration of individual well-being within the field of psychology.

#### 2.2.1. Judith Lewis Herman

##### 2.2.1.1. Life

Judith Lewis Herman, born in 1942 in New York City, is a renowned psychiatrist and author celebrated for her extensive contributions to trauma psychology. Her ground breaking work, notably encapsulated in "*Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*," has significantly shaped the understanding of trauma's psychological impact. Herman's comprehensive analysis emphasizes the pivotal roles of unity, reconciliation, pardon, conflict resolution, and healing in navigating the complexities of trauma recovery.

[213] Julius K. Nyerere, remarks during the Burundi peace talks, quoted in Timothy Mgaya, *The Road to Peace in Burundi* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2002), 67.

### 2.2.1.2. Insights on Reconciliation and Healing

#### 2.2.1.2.1. Unity and Reconciliation in Trauma Recovery

Unity and reconciliation in trauma recovery can be understood as the deliberate and sustained efforts within communities or societies to address historical wounds, promote healing, and restore relationships fractured by past conflicts or traumatic events. This process involves acknowledging the pain and suffering experienced by individuals or groups, engaging in dialogue, fostering empathy, and pursuing actions aimed at rebuilding trust, understanding, and shared purpose. It is a multifaceted endeavor that seeks to transcend divisions, cultivate solidarity, and establish a foundation for peaceful coexistence and collective growth.[214]

Herman's work highlights the intrinsic significance of unity and reconciliation in the aftermath of trauma. Unity involves the creation of a cohesive support system among survivors, fostering shared experiences and solidarity within affected communities. It provides a nurturing environment essential for individual healing while simultaneously offering mutual understanding and support. Reconciliation, on the other hand, encompasses the restoration of fractured relationships and the resolution of conflicts stemming from traumatic experiences. Herman stresses the necessity of fostering unity and reconciliation not only for individual recovery but also for rebuilding social harmony within traumatized communities.[215]

#### 2.2.1.2.2. Pardon as A Catalyst for Healing

Pardon, within the context of healing, operates as a powerful instrument that can facilitate several aspects of the healing process. It allows individuals to release the emotional burden carried from grievances or past hurtful experiences. By pardoning or forgiving, individuals

[214] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 2005), 87.
[215] Judith Herman Lewis, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 180.

often experience relief from anger, resentment, and negative emotions, leading to emotional healing and inner peace.

Herman's perspective underscores the crucial role of pardon or forgiveness in the trajectory of reconciliation and healing. Pardon involves relinquishing feelings of anger and resentment, freeing oneself from the emotional burdens imposed by the traumatic event. However, Herman stresses that pardon should be viewed as a personal choice rather than a mandatory step in the healing journey. It symbolizes a significant milestone in the survivor's path to recovery, signifying the reclamation of agency over one's emotional well-being. It's imperative to understand that the decision to pardon should evolve naturally and not be forced upon survivors.[216]

#### 2.2.1.2.3. Conflict Resolution as Path to Reconciliation

In the realm of reconciliation, negotiating agreement serves as a cornerstone, facilitating the resolution of deep-seated conflicts and fostering understanding among estranged communities.[217] Within Herman's framework, conflict resolution emerges as a pivotal component in trauma recovery and reconciliation. Traumatic experiences often lead to fractured relationships and community discord. Effective conflict resolution mechanisms play a crucial role in addressing these divisions and rebuilding trust within the community. Herman advocates for strategies prioritizing open communication, empathy, and understanding among affected individuals. By addressing underlying conflicts and fostering dialogue, communities

[216] Lewis, *Trauma and Recovery*, 225.

[217] In the book "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In," William Ury discusses conflict resolution as "a way of resolving differences so that the parties involved can reach an agreement that is mutually satisfactory" (Ury, 1991, p. 11). Highlighting the collaborative nature of this approach, Ury underscores the importance of addressing disputes by seeking common ground and reaching agreements that benefit all sides. He emphasizes the significance of negotiation and cooperation in resolving conflicts, aiming not just to reach an agreement but to find solutions that satisfy the interests and needs of all parties involved. This definition encapsulates conflict resolution as a constructive process that prioritizes mutual satisfaction and understanding while facilitating the resolution of differences through dialogue and compromise.

can move closer to reconciliation, creating an environment conducive to healing and recovery.[218]

#### 2.2.1.2.4. Healing Through Unity and Reconciliation

Healing through unity and reconciliation is a profound psychological process that transcends individual trauma and fosters collective resilience. Herman's seminal work underscores that healing from trauma is intricately linked with the establishment of unity and reconciliation within affected communities. Healing, she posits, transcends individual recovery; it's a collective process necessitating the restoration of social bonds and communal support. Unity fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity, providing a space where survivors feel understood and supported. Reconciliation, facilitated by conflict resolution and forgiveness, lays the groundwork for rebuilding relationships and reinstating trust, paving the way for communal healing.[219]

### 2.2.2. Carl Rogers

#### 2.2.2.1. Life

Carl Rogers, born in 1902 in Illinois, embarked on a profound journey that reshaped the contours of psychology. As a pioneering figure in humanistic psychology and person-centered therapy, Rogers' life was marked by an unwavering commitment to understanding the human experience. His foundational principles of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and authenticity permeate the landscape of contemporary therapeutic practices, profoundly influencing the ways therapists engage with clients and foster healing and personal growth.

#### 2.2.2.2. Rogers' Fundamental Ideals

Rogers devoted substantial contemplation to a simple yet profound concept: individuals crave acceptance, and within an accepting environment, they are inclined to evolve towards self-

[218] Lewis, *Trauma and Recovery*, 250.
[219] Lewis, *Trauma and Recovery*, 275.

actualization, embodying their highest potential. His method of assisting individuals primarily involves cultivating a secure and empathetic space conducive to reconciliation and healing, enabling someone's inherent drive for self-actualization to flourish.[220] At the core of his mindset lies the belief in the inherent goodness and potential for growth within each person. His seminal work, such as "Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory," expounds upon these fundamental principles.[221]

#### 2.2.2.3. Insights on Healing

##### 2.2.2.3.1. Empathy as the Foundation of Healing

A key part of Rogers' approach is empathetic understanding, where the therapist seeks to understand the client's experience with care and without judgment. This is central to person-centered therapy, highlighting the therapist's genuine effort to grasp the client's unique perspective and emotions. In this approach, the therapist strives to enter the client's world empathetically, attempting to perceive the world as the client does, without projecting their own biases or interpretations onto the client's experiences. Through active listening, reflecting feelings, and demonstrating genuine empathy, the therapist creates a supportive atmosphere that enables the client to explore their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors freely. This process encourages the individual's self-exploration, self-acceptance, and personal growth, as the client feels understood and valued, fostering a conducive environment for healing and positive change to occur. The empathetic connection established between therapist and client serves as a catalyst for the client's self-understanding and facilitates their journey towards greater self-awareness and psychological well-being.[222] This empathetic connection, as Rogers contends in

[220] Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 9.
[221] Carl Rogers, *A Theory of Therapy*, 184-205.
[222] Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 67-69.

"On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy," serves as the bedrock for personal transformation and healing.[223]

Furthermore, within the context of reconciliation, empathy plays a pivotal role. It encourages individuals to acknowledge and comprehend the perspectives, emotions, and experiences of others, especially in situations marked by conflict or division. By cultivating empathy, individuals can navigate differences with compassion, seeking to understand the root causes of discord and fostering a pathway towards forgiveness and reconciliation. Pardon, integral to the empathetic process, involves the acknowledgment of harm done, the acceptance of responsibility, and a willingness to move forward. In therapeutic settings, it may involve both self-forgiveness and forgiving others, a process facilitated by the empathetic understanding fostered by therapists like Rogers.

Moreover, Rogers emphasizes the significance of unconditional positive regard, advocating for an environment where individuals are accepted and valued for who they are, without conditions or expectations.[224] This unconditional acceptance, as explicated in "A Way of Being," allows individuals to explore their emotions and experiences freely, fostering genuine self-exploration and growth.[225]

In his pursuit to understand human behavior, Rogers delves into the intricacies of congruence, authenticity, and self-disclosure. Through these elements, detailed in "On Personal Power: Inner Strength and Its Revolutionary Impact," he accentuates the therapist's genuine and transparent interaction as essential for building trust and facilitating clients' self-exploration.[226]

[223]Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*., 132.

[225] Carl Rogers, *On Personal Power: Inner Strength and Its Revolutionary Impact, (*Delacorte Press, 1977), 97-98

[226] Rogers, *On Personal Power: Inner Strength and Its Revolutionary Impact, 90.*

#### 2.2.2.3.2. Authenticity and Congruence in Healing

Another critical insight from Rogers is the role of **congruence and authenticity** in the healing process. Rogers posited that a therapist's genuineness and transparency are pivotal in building trust and fostering a therapeutic relationship that facilitates healing. Congruence refers to the alignment between the therapist's inner feelings and outward expressions, ensuring authenticity in their interactions with clients. When therapists are open, honest, and congruent, they model an attitude of self-acceptance and integrity, encouraging clients to explore their true selves without fear of judgment or pretense.[227]

This authenticity is particularly crucial because it creates a safe and trustworthy environment where clients can engage in self-exploration. Rogers contended that incongruence, or the disparity between a person's real self and their perceived self, often lies at the heart of psychological distress. Through authentic interaction, the therapist helps the client bridge this gap, fostering greater self-awareness and self-acceptance. As Rogers elaborates congruence is a cornerstone of effective therapy and a catalyst for personal growth and emotional healing.[228] Furthermore, congruence and authenticity also extend to the client's journey towards healing. By engaging authentically with their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, individuals can confront internal conflicts, identify their true needs, and work towards resolving their psychological struggles. Rogers believed that this alignment between one's true self and lived experience leads to a sense of fulfillment, self-worth, and overall well-being.[229]

[227]Rogers, *On Becoming a Person, 115.*
[228] Rogers,*On Becoming a Person,* 116-117.
[229] Rogers, *On Becoming a Person,* 129.

## 2.3 Anthropologists

Anthropologists delve into reconciliation, exploring cultural frameworks fostering harmony in post-conflict situation. In our exploration, we will delve into Charles Nyamiti's insights on African Christian theology and Clement Majawa's contributions, shedding light on diverse cultural perspectives shaping the discourse on reconciliation within anthropology.

### 2.3.1. Charles Nyamiti

#### 2.3.1.1. Life and profound Legacy

Charles Nyamiti, born in 1931 among Tanzania's Wanyamwezi people, was a distinguished theologian and anthropologist acclaimed for his pioneering contributions to African theology. His educational journey, starting at Kipalapala Major Seminary, led him to acquire expertise in Systematic Theology, Music Theory, Piano, Cultural Anthropology, and Music Composition through advanced studies in Europe. Upon returning to Tanzania, he served as a professor at Kipalapala Major Seminary from 1976 to 1981 and later held a significant role at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, from 1983 to 2019. Nyamiti's profound impact transcended academic borders, influencing theological perspectives worldwide, particularly within an African context. His scholarly depth spanned theological reflections, emphasizing the fusion of Christian faith with African worldviews, alongside insights gleaned from cultural anthropology, which enriched his interdisciplinary contributions. His pioneering work and scholarly influence endure even after his passing in 2020, leaving an indelible mark on African theology and cultural understanding.[230]

[230] Charles **Nyamiti,** *Biography of Charles Nyamiti*. Dictionary of African Christian Biography. https://dacb.org/stories/tanzania/nyamiti-charles pdf (Accessed 01/03/2025).

### 2.3.1.2. Exploring Unity through Ancestral Models and Trinitarian Harmony

Nyamiti, a prominent figure among African theologians, intricately examines the rich tapestry of African spirituality. His exploration delves into ancestral models as a framework to comprehend the divine, particularly emphasizing the unifying aspect within the Holy Trinity.[231] Nyamiti's perspective aligns with that of Joseph Boakye Danquah establishing God as the great ancestor. This portrayal offers a profound conceptualization that unites people by recognizing a shared ancestry and an interconnectedness that transcends individual identity and societal divisions.[232]

Nyamiti's alignment with Danquah's portrayal of God as the great ancestor transcends mere theological interpretation; it serves as a foundational concept fostering unity and collective identity. This shared ancestral framework permeates his theological discourse, emphasizing a holistic understanding of spirituality that bridges individual faith with communal ties and underscores the interconnectedness among people.[233]

The portrayal of God as the primary ancestor in Nyamiti's framework lays a foundation for unity. This African understanding, embedded in traditions, acknowledges God as the progenitor of all, including human ancestors. It serves as a unifying concept, emphasizing shared roots and fostering a collective identity among diverse communities.[234] Danquah's depiction of God as the eminent ancestor further solidifies this concept, portraying God as the ultimate source connecting all beings and cultures.[235]

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[231]Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life,* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 45.
[232] Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life,45.*
[233] Joseph Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God,* (London: Frank Cass, 1944), 44
[234] Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God,*145.
[235] Harry Sawyerr, *God:* Ancestor *or Creator?(London:* Longman, 1970), 13.

Nyamiti's exploration extends to Christ as the Brother Ancestor, highlighting a significant connection that seeks unity between the Father and the Son. This portrayal emphasizes a brotherly relationship, intending to bridge divides and unify humanity under the shared kinship of Christ.[236] Sawyerr's portrayal of Christ as the elder brother and firstborn resonates within the African context, aiming to establish a sense of brotherhood that transcends societal divisions and fosters unity among people.[237]

The concept of Christ as an archetype superior to all ancestors is a key focus in Nyamiti's exploration. This portrayal amalgamates both the divine and human aspects of Christ's nature, serving as a unifying force that transcends boundaries and fosters a collective understanding. This combined divinity and humanity within Christ forms a bridge between ancestral relationships and serves as a unifying factor among diverse communities.[238]

In interpreting the Trinity within ancestral relationships, Nyamiti emphasizes on unity. He proposes a reciprocal kinship between the Father and the Son within the Trinity, highlighting mutual communication facilitated by the Holy Spirit. This portrayal accentuates unity as an inherent aspect of the divine relationship, advocating for a similar unity among human relations.[239]

Nyamiti stresses the theological implications, emphasizing the significance of establishing a profound link between Christ and believers to achieve unity. He posits that without this connection, the ancestral interpretation of Christology within the Trinity remains incomplete. The emphasis on unity within these theological frameworks underscores its pivotal role in fostering a cohesive understanding of divine and human relationships.[240]

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[236] Aylward Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church,* (London: Chapman, 1973), 17-18.
[237] https://dacb.org/stories/tanzania/nyamiti-charles pdf /(Accessed 01/03/2025)., 28.
[238] Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life,* 132.
[239] Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor,* (Harare: Mambo Press, 1984), 83.
[240] Nyamiti , *Christ as Our Ancestor* , 64-65.

Nyamiti's exploration into African ancestral models offers a comprehensive lens to comprehend unity within the Holy Trinity. His alignment with Danquah's depiction of God as the great ancestor and Christ as the Brother Ancestor aims to foster unity among diverse communities. His emphasis on reciprocal ancestral relationships underlines a deeper interconnectedness between God, Christ, and believers, highlighting the significance of unity and its role in fostering a collective and unified understanding.[241]

The emphasis on unity within ancestral models and Trinitarian understanding highlights its critical importance. Without such unity, divisions can emerge, potentially leading to conflicts and violence among individuals and communities. The focus on unity in these theological frameworks not only enhances spiritual connections but also holds significant implications for societal harmony and peaceful coexistence.

#### 2.3.1.3. Anthropological theological perspectives on Healing and Reconciliation

Nyamiti, an African theologian and anthropologist made significant contributions to the concepts of healing and reconciliation in the African context. His work on ancestor Christology bridges African spiritual concepts and Christian theology, offering a model for reconciliation that emphasizes relational healing. By presenting Christ as the "Brother-Ancestor," Nyamiti sees him as a mediator who reconciles broken relationships between individuals, communities, and God. This ancestral model has implications for how African societies, including Rwanda, understand healing as a relational process grounded in spiritual and communal restoration.[242]

Nyamiti also explores the theme of healing in the context of African traditional religious practices, where reconciliation is not merely juridical but deeply spiritual. He discusses how in African traditions, healing is a holistic process that involves not just physical recovery but also the restoration of social and spiritual harmony.[243]

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[241] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 85.
[242] Nyamiti, Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 50-52.
[243] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*,50.

Reconciliation, as understood in African traditions, is not simply a juridical act but a communal and spiritual one. Healing, in the African context, is a holistic process that includes not only the physical but also the social and spiritual restoration of harmony. This concept of healing, which seeks the restoration of right relationships, is also central to Christian theology. Christ, as the 'Brother-Ancestor,' serves as the mediator who reconciles the broken relationships between people, God, and creation, thus offering a theological foundation for post-conflict healing.[244]

Nyamiti stresses the importance of liturgical practices, such as confession and the Eucharist, as tools for both spiritual and social healing. In post-genocide Rwanda, such theological insights support the role of the Church in guiding communities through processes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing of collective wounds.

The Church, as the sacrament of reconciliation, is called to be the community of healing. It is through the Church that God's reconciling love is manifested, particularly in the celebration of the sacraments. In African society, reconciliation involves the restoration of broken relationships, and it is through liturgical practices such as confession and the Eucharist that individuals and communities are healed. These sacraments are means through which the community is restored, not only on the individual level but also socially.[245]

In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, the Church's role in the healing process is essential, as it facilitates the forgiveness and reconciliation needed for the restoration of social and spiritual harmony.

[244] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 51.
[245] Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, 52.

### 2.3.2. Clement Majawa

#### 2.3.2.1. Life

Clement Chinkambako Abeguuni Majawa was born in 1958 in Southern Malawi and he belong to the Catholic Archdiocese of Blantyre. He is an esteemed theologian and anthropologist, Dogmatic and Spiritual Theologian who has Education, and Psycho-somatic therapeutic spiritual Counselling.[246]

Majawa's expertise extends to various domains, including being a theological critic and hermeneutic of Inculturation. He is a prolific writer, author, and playwright, showcasing creativity as an artist, poet, and motivational speaker. Additionally, he serves as a facilitator for conferences focusing on Theology, Spirituality, Education, Ecumenism, Human Rights, Priestly and Religious Life, '*Ubuntuism*,' 'Africana Humana,' and Magicology.[247]

#### 2.3.2.2 Insights on Reconciliation

##### 2.3.2.2.1. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The African practices of reconciliation and peace-building have the divine source God. This traditional process of conflict-resolution has to be analytically explored and preserved to safeguard the values, which can benefit the African Church and nations in the re-construction of the places or regions torn apart by armed conflicts.[248]

In the African traditional analysis, reconciliation is the theological term relating people to the situation of redemption and salvation. It connotes the methodical coming together of two or three persons or parties after a misunderstanding or estrangement. It is an aspect of the African doctrine of the cosmotheandrian relationship and harmony. Dominant in the numerous instances of this relationship in the traditional societies, is the reconciliation of a person from

[246] *Clement Majawa*, https://profmajawa.com. Accessed on 28/02/2025.
[247] https://profmajawa.com. Accessed on 28/02/2025.
[248] Clement Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*: *In the light of Yao traditions*, (Nairobi: Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2009), 206.

one to the other, nature and God: having been alienated from God by sin and irresponsible acts. God, the creator thus, provides the means and the mystical power of reconciliation.[249]

The philosophy of the Yao people perceives the community as a realm of forgiveness and reconciliation. Their core belief revolves around the notion that since creation, God has bestowed upon individuals the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation as a gift that binds the community together. According to their beliefs, daily life necessitates acts of forgiveness and reconciliation. Therefore, to exist within their society is to actively engage in reciprocating forgiveness and reconciliation.[250]

Despite the sense of belonging and trust that exists among people, there are inevitably occasions where words and actions cause hurt feelings, leading to self-promotion and situations where sensitivities clash. This is why communal living necessitates a degree of sacrifice and selflessness. It involves continual effort, acceptance, mutual forgiveness, radical reconciliation, and comprehensive development.[251]

According to Clement Majawa, forgiveness is not a proposal that can be immediately understood or easily accepted; in many ways it is a paradoxical message. Forgiveness in fact always involves an apparent short-term loss for a real long-term gain. Violence is the exact opposite; opting as it does for an apparent short-term gain, it involves a real and permanent loss. Forgiveness may seem like weakness, but it demands great spiritual strength and moral courage, both in granting it and in accepting it. It may seem in some way to diminish us, but in fact it leads us to a fuller and richer humanity, more radiant with the splendor of the Creator.[252]

[249] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 207
[250] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 61.
[251] John Watha Dzimbiri, *The World view and Tradition of Yao people*, (London: Franklars press, 1924), 108.
[252] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 267.

#### 2.3.2.2.2. Symbiotic Reconciliation

Majawa highlights the concept of reconciliation within the context of the Yao community[253], specifically emphasizing the symbiotic reconciliation[254] process facilitated by a chief or council of elders.

Reconciliation is a process in which a just resolution of a disagreement or conflict is reached by parties themselves with the assistance and facilitation of a third party (in Yao community by a chief or council of elders). The essence of reconciliation is a just agreement or compromise. It is a compromise of conflicting demands of rights. It is different from court trials where the aim of court is to decide which side is to be granted the right. But with reconciliation, the aim is to reconcile the conflicting parties; to make them understand, accept each other and then agree. The basis for this is natural justice where one foregoes one's certain claim because of the demand of natural justice and the ability to trust and accept the word of the third party or third person.[255]

Reconciliation and peace-making are social values which are rooted in the Yao soul. There had always been misunderstandings, conflicts, tension, antipathies and enmity among the tribes of Africa. Reconciliation serves as a transformative social norm. In Yao community, an offence is punished by *Mlungu* and acknowledged by the ancestors. An offence injures the members of the family, the entire village and the community. The interior person of a human being has an intrinsic bearing on the exterior person and on the social context, as asserted by Yao anthropology. They thought that the individual has a corporate personality and that sin can

[253] The Yao people (or WaYao) are a major Bantu ethnic and linguistic group living at the southern end of Lake Malawi. They played an important role in the history of Southeast Africa, notably in the 19th century. The Yao are a predominantly Muslim-faith group of about two million, whose homelands encompass the countries of Malawi, the north of Mozambique, and the Ruvuma and Mtwara Regions of Tanzania.

[254] In the context of conflict resolution or reconciliation, "symbiotic reconciliation" implies a process where conflicting parties work together, acknowledging their interdependence, to find a resolution that not only addresses their differences but also fosters a relationship beneficial to all involved. It emphasizes the idea that the resolution achieved should benefit both sides, acknowledging their shared interests and interconnectedness within a community or a social framework.

[255] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 127.

destroy the sinner, the family, village or lineage. Sin breaks the relationship between a family and *Mlungu.* It is sin that brings alienation from the community and the living-dead (ancestors) which in turn brings social disorder or disaster in demonstration of sin. Hence, sin is an offence against the ancestors, community, individual, divinities and *Mlungu (God).*[256]

The chief supports and help both the offender and the offended to reach a true reconciliation. He facilitates the real change of attitudes and convenes the meeting for both parties and ensures that both of them are cordially brought back to good relationship with the entire village, the living dead and *Mlungu.* They both meet again for the second time at chief's courtyard as a proof of genuine reconciliation and healing to interiorize and substantiate the reconciliatory ritual. The two would promise each other to carry out a task of forgiveness when they return home. True reconciliation does not end in verbal eloquence but is absorbed into one's heart and is translated into action. [257]

### 2.3.2.3. Insights on Healing and Reconciliation

#### 2.3.2.3.1. Healing in the process of Reconciliation

Conflict often leads to violence, discrimination, and broken relationships, affecting individuals mentally, physically, and socially. True reconciliation requires more than addressing external issues it begins with healing within the heart. By fostering forgiveness and unity of body and soul, peace becomes attainable both personally and communally. Clement Majawa highlights the profound link between inner healing and the process of reconciliation.

[256] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 146.
[257] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 183-185

The dynamism within the process of reconciliation is discovered within one's inner self (the heart). This centered personality evolves into a newfound embodiment of peace and comprehensive reconciliation, becoming achievable within the socio-pastoral process.[258]

For peace-making in Africa, we must go beyond the language of justice to the ones of tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Reconciliation has exterior and interior dimensions. The human being is a unity of interior and exterior aspects, not dualism of division of body and soul but a unity of body and soul, forming a single nature. The body is a means of expressing oneself and is revelatory, a revealer of one's interiority, making the person present; the body is a sacrament, a visible entity that makes an interior reality present. That is why the process of genuine reconciliation begins with the interior of a person. The body language is important. The body enables the person to relate to the cosmos, the world and God. We connect to our bodies and to our feelings and to our life if we are to be fully alive. Thus, the process of reconciliation starts with the interior personality of the victim. Forgiveness begins from the heart and leads to reconciliation that is genuine; leads to the healing of the mind, soul and body.[259]

### 2.3.2.3.2. Community as place of Healing and Reconciliation

A community is a powerful space for healing and reconciliation, where individuals come together to restore relationships and foster peace. In the Yao Community, Majawa has highlighted the importance of conciliation, forgiveness, and unity in overcoming conflicts.[260]

The Yao community exemplifies a deep sense of unity, where reconciliation and healing are central to their way of life. In this community, conciliation is a shared process, facilitated by a chief or council of elders, aimed at resolving conflicts through mutual understanding rather

[258] Jason Trevor, *Healing and Reconciliation Process: An Urgent Pastoral Agenda*, (New Jersey : Good will publishing House, 2001),204
[259]Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 199.
[260] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*, 135.

than through legal decisions. This method fosters compromise and reconciliation, allowing conflicting parties to accept one another and agree on a just resolution. Such a process emphasizes the importance of natural justice, where individuals may relinquish personal claims for the greater good, trusting in the impartiality of the third party.[261]

Reconciliation within the Yao community goes beyond individual relationships; it extends to the collective. The community thrives on transparency, accountability, and a strong sense of belonging, gifted by God. This spirit of cooperation and mutual responsibility creates a nurturing environment for transformation and healing. As a place of forgiveness, the Yao community embraces shared vulnerabilities and strengths, fostering patience and trust. It is here that members experience reconciliation, not only with one another but with God, embodying the core values of love, care, and warmth as they work together for their common mission.[262]

Conciliation, as practiced in the Yao community, is deeply rooted in their cultural heritage and Christian faith. Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17:21 finds expression in the Yao's communal life, where material resources, values, and faith are shared. This strong bond promotes solidarity, mutual aid, and collaboration, all essential for the community's survival and growth. In this setting, the family plays a pivotal role as the foundation of reconciliation, where unity, dialogue, and forgiveness are cultivated, making the Yao community a place where healing and peace naturally flourish.[263] In Rwanda, much like the Yao Community, post-genocide healing emphasized communal reconciliation, where dialogue and shared values restored relationships and fostered unity.

[261] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*,134.
[262] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*,134.
[263] Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation*,134.

## 2.4 World Religions

Exploring reconciliation in Judaism and Islam unveils shared principles of forgiveness and healing within their rich histories. In this exploration, we delve into the nuances of reconciliation, offering insights into fostering harmony and understanding.

### 2.4.1. Judaism

#### 2.4.1.1. The Background of Judaism

Judaism is the world's oldest monotheistic religion, dating back nearly 4,000BC. It is a tradition built on the scriptures, ethical commandments governing daily conduct.[264]

Judaism is characterized by a belief in one transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses, and the Hebrew prophets and by a religious life in accordance with Scriptures and rabbinic traditions. Judaism is the complex phenomenon of a total way of life for the Jewish people, comprising theology, law, and innumerable cultural.[265]

#### 2.4.1.2. Insights on Reconciliation

##### 2.4.1.2.1. Doctrine of Judaism

The Doctrine of Judaism outlines key beliefs, including the covenant with God, monotheism, ethical laws, and messianic hope, guiding Jewish faith, practice, and community.

The cornerstone of Jewish doctrine is the *covenant* (*brit*), a sacred agreement between God and the Jewish people as outlined in the Torah. This covenant frames the ethical, ritual, and theological dimensions of Jewish life. Through it, the Jewish people are called to live in accordance with God's laws, thereby sanctifying their lives and the world around them. The covenant is both a historical and a continuing spiritual commitment that manifests through the

[264] Edward R. Canda & Leola D. Furman, *Spiritual diversity in social work practice*, (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 141.
[265] Arthur Hertzberg , *Judaism Religion*, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Judaism (Accessed on 22/12/2023).

observance of the commandments (*mitzvot*), which guide the moral and religious behavior of Jews.[266]

Central to Jewish theology is the belief in monotheism, as epitomized in the *Shema* prayer: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This declaration underscores God's uniqueness, transcendent nature, and immanence. In Judaism, God is both the Creator of the universe and an active force in human history. The belief in divine unity emphasizes the singularity of God's role in creation and His involvement in the moral ordering of the world.[267]

Jewish doctrine includes a vision for the future in the form of messianic hope, which anticipates the coming of a messiah who will bring peace and justice to the world. This belief in a messianic age, when the world will be perfected, has inspired generations of Jews to work toward social and moral betterment. The hope for the redemption of the world is intertwined with the ethical teachings of *Tikkun Olam*, encouraging individuals to contribute to the realization of divine justice on earth.[268]

The Talmud, a central text in Jewish law and theology, provides extensive commentary on the Torah and expands upon its teachings. It offers interpretations, legal rulings, and moral guidance, making it indispensable for understanding Jewish doctrine. The Talmud is divided into two components: the Mishnah (oral law) and the Gemara (rabbinic commentary), both of which collectively shape Jewish legal and ethical thought. Jewish scholars throughout history have used the Talmud to apply the principles of the Torah to new and evolving circumstances.[269]

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[266] *Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1955), 236.*
[267] Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 142.
[268] Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish* Spirituality, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 6.
[269] Adin Steinsaltz, *The Essential Talmud*, (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 93.

The Doctrine of Judaism, with its focus on the covenant, ethical conduct, and Tikkun Olam, provides a profound foundation for healing and reconciliation. The emphasis on justice, compassion, and moral responsibility calls individuals and communities to work toward repairing relationships and the world. Through adherence to these principles, Judaism encourages both personal and communal healing, aligning with the pursuit of reconciliation and social justice as integral to faith.

#### 2.4.1.2.2. Jewish Context of Reconciliation

The historical context of reconciliation within Jewish tradition offers profound insights for post-genocide healing in Rwanda. Jewish history is rich with narratives of forgiveness and restoration, such as the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 37-50[270]. Joseph's act of profound forgiveness, despite betrayal, exemplifies the possibility of transcending deep wounds to mend fractured relationships. Similarly, Aaron's pursuit of peace, as highlighted in the Talmud, underscores the value of mediation and reconciliation.

Jacob Neusner's highlights the story of Joseph and his brothers, depicting Joseph's profound forgiveness, transcending past conflicts to mend familial ties. The narrative exemplifies reconciliation's essence within Judaism, showcasing Joseph's transformative forgiveness, fostering healing and restoration despite grievances. This tale serves as a testament to the enduring values of forgiveness and reconciliation, echoing through Jewish teachings,

[270] Joseph, the favored son of Jacob, was hated by his brothers because of their jealousy. They sold him into slavery in Egypt and told their father he was dead. In Egypt, Joseph endured hardships but eventually rose to power, becoming Pharaoh's second-in-command after interpreting dreams that predicted a great famine. Years later, during the famine, Joseph's brothers unknowingly came to Egypt seeking food. Joseph tested them but ultimately revealed his identity, forgave them, and provided for his family. He reassured them, saying, **"**You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). This story highlights God's providence, the power of forgiveness, and the restoration of broken relationships.

emphasizing the capacity for forgiveness to bridge divides and restore fractured relationships, as exemplified in Joseph's remarkable reconciliation with his brothers.[271]

Jewish reconciliation narratives, particularly Joseph's forgiveness and Aaron's peacemaking, offer valuable insights for Rwanda's post-genocide healing, inspiring efforts toward forgiveness, mediation, and unity to restore fractured relationships and communal well-being. Aaron's pursuit of peace, illustrated in Talmud Bavli's Tractate, serves as a profound exemplar. His endeavor to reconcile conflicting factions echoes the enduring value of peacemaking within Judaism. Aaron's commitment to bridging divides and fostering unity stands as an inspiring testament, emphasizing the significance of mediation and reconciliation. This narrative resonates as a guiding principle, highlighting the noble pursuit of harmony and understanding, symbolizing the timeless wisdom embedded in Jewish teachings, urging individuals to actively seek reconciliation for the betterment of relationships and communal well-being.[272]

#### 2.4.1.2.3. Theological Foundations of Reconciliation

Reconciliation in Judaism centers on *Teshuvah*,[273] emphasizing acknowledgment of wrongs, seeking forgiveness from God and others, and making amends. *Teshuvah*, pivotal to Jewish belief, fosters repentance and return, guiding individuals towards healing fractured relationships. Rooted in Jonathan Sacks' "*To Heal a Fractured World*," it underscores the profound process of acknowledging faults, seeking divine and human forgiveness, and actively repairing bonds, embodying the essence of reconciliation within Jewish teachings.[274]

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[271] Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud: What It is and what It says*, (New York: Harper One, 2006), 118.
[272] Talmud Bavli, *Tractate Yoma* 38b, Volume X, 20.
[273] Teshuvah, the Hebrew term for "repentance" or "return" in Judaism, is guided by a structured process. It involves deep introspection, acknowledging one's wrongdoings, and assuming responsibility for those actions. The individual engages in seeking forgiveness from those they've wronged, making amends, and committing to personal and spiritual growth. Teshuvah entails genuine regret for past mistakes, a dedicated resolve to change for the better, and a sincere desire to reconcile not only with other individuals but also with a higher spiritual realm or divine authority. This process is often undertaken during specific periods like the High Holy Days, particularly Yom Kippur, but it's an ongoing principle guiding personal and communal behavior in Judaism.
[274] Jonathan Sacks, *To Heal a fractured world*, (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 178.

The High Holy Days, notably Yom Kippur, amplify *Teshuvah*'s significance, stressing the pursuit of reconciliation and relationship restoration within Judaism. Joseph *Telushkin*'s "*Jewish Literacy*" highlights this emphasis, affirming the pivotal role of these sacred days in urging individuals to seek reconciliation. Yom Kippur, central to Jewish practice, serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of introspection, seeking forgiveness, and rectifying interpersonal connections, aligning with the essence of Teshuvah as a means of spiritual renewal and healing, as expounded in Jewish teachings.[275]

#### 2.4.1.2.4. Contemporary Relevance and Application

Contemporary Jewish practices of reconciliation underscore the importance of fostering dialogue and understanding among diverse groups, aligning closely with Rwanda's aspirations for unity. Restorative justice programs, drawing inspiration from Jewish teachings deeply rooted in principles of Teshuvah (repentance) and healing, prioritize the repair of rifts stemming from conflicts and transgressions. These initiatives, as elucidated by Eric M. Meyers signify a commitment to repairing social harm. They encapsulate Jewish values by fostering dialogue, accountability, and restitution, emphasizing not only the resolution of immediate disputes but also the nurturing of a collective environment grounded in empathy, understanding, and communal healing.[276]

Furthermore, contemporary Jewish practice embraces community-based initiatives that actively foster dialogue and understanding among diverse groups. These endeavors, highlighted by David J. Reimer signify a profound commitment to the pursuit of reconciliation and unity.

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[275] Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History*, (New York: William Morrow Paperbacks, 1991), 433.
[276] Eric M.Meyers, *Healing the heart of conflict: Eight crucial steps to making peace with yourself and others,* (New York: Harmony, 2004), 72.

These efforts go beyond the inner workings of the community and address larger societal issues, striving to close divides among diverse groups. By promoting dialogue and understanding, they exemplify Judaism's commitment to repairing the world and establishing a society founded on mutual respect, empathy, and the shared pursuit of reconciliation across diverse communities, aligning with the core principles of Jewish teachings on social responsibility and justice.[277]

In the context of Rwanda's post-genocide healing, the principles of reconciliation rooted in contemporary Jewish practice offer valuable insights. Emphasizing the restoration of harmony within communities, these practices resonate deeply with Rwanda's efforts to mend the social fabric torn by conflict. Jewish teachings on Teshuvah (repentance) and healing inspire restorative justice programs that prioritize repairing relationships and addressing social harm. Initiatives that foster dialogue, accountability, and restitution reflect the commitment to not only resolve disputes but also cultivate a collective environment centered on empathy and communal healing.

### 2.4.2. Islam

Reconciliation in Islam represents a fundamental principle deeply embedded in the teachings and practices of the faith. Rooted in compassion, justice, and forgiveness, Islamic teaching emphasizes the importance of resolving conflicts and fostering harmony within communities. This study aims to explore the principles, significance, and methods of reconciliation in Islam, drawing from the Quran, Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad), and scholarly interpretation.

[277] Meyers, Eric M., "Healing the Heart of Conflict: Eight Crucial Steps to Making Peace with Yourself and Others." (New York: Harmony, 2004),95.

#### 2.4.2.1. The Background of Islam

Islam is one of the major monotheistic religions, tracing its origins to around 610 CE when Muhammad, a highly spiritual and reflective man, is believed to have received divine revelations during his periods of solitude and meditation in a cave near Mecca. These revelations, delivered through the angel Gabriel, would later be compiled into the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. Muhammad's teachings focused on the oneness of God (Allah), social justice, and moral conduct, and he came to be regarded as the last prophet in a long line that included figures such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. The word Islam, as adopted by Muhammad as the distinctive name of the faith which he preached, means submitting oneself to God (Allah).[278]

As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah. This principle forms the foundation of Muslim life, where believers (Muslims) are required to follow Allah's commands as revealed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the practices of Muhammad). Abul A'la Mawdudi, a renowned Islamic scholar, emphasizes this by stating that the literal meaning of Islam is peace and this signifies that one can achieve real peace of body and mind only through submission and obedience to Allah.[279] Thus, Islam advocates not only for spiritual devotion but also for harmony and order in both personal and communal life.

#### 2.4.2.2. Insights on Reconciliation

##### 2.4.2.2.1. Doctrine

The basis for Islamic doctrine is found in the Qur'an[280], which serves as the ultimate and unshakeable foundation of Islamic belief and practice. Muslims hold that the Qur'an is not just any text but the literal word of God, revealed through the angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad.

[278] Hamiton A.R Gibb, *Towards understanding Islam*, (Nairobi: Islamic Foundation, 2000), 2.
[279] Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi, *Journey into Islam. An Attempt to awaken Christians in Africa*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2008), 15.
[280] Hamiton A.R Gibb, *Towards understanding Islam*, (Nairobi: Islamic Foundation, 2000), 2.

It is considered divine in origin and provides guidance on all aspects of life, from moral principles to religious obligations. The teachings in the Qur'an are essential for guiding Muslims in their daily experiences, shaping both their spiritual and worldly lives. It is viewed as the infallible and unerring word of God, meant to be followed without question by all who submit to Allah's will.[281]

Muslims relate with God through the five pillars of religion: Faith (*Shahada*), Prayer (*Salah*), Almsgiving (*Zakat),* Fasting (*Sawm*), and Pilgrimage (*Hajj*). These pillars are the core practices that shape the daily devotion and spiritual life of every Muslim.[282]

Muslims believe that the Qur'an, initially delivered to Muhammad in oral form, was interpreted and explained by the Prophet himself and his companions. However, after Muhammad's death, the Qur'an was written down during the caliphate of Abu Bakr to preserve its message. Comprising 114 surahs (chapters), the Qur'an is organized from longest to shortest chapters, and it stands as the central and complete guide for Muslims. For them, Muhammad was not only a messenger to mankind[283] but also the greatest and last prophet in a line of messengers, sealing the prophetic tradition with the Qur'an as the final and complete revelation from God.[284]

The main message of Islam is monotheism. Belief in monotheism is the cornerstone of the Islamic faith. Muslims believe that all the Prophets sent by God to humanity shared the same central message, and that was the message of monotheism; Muslims believe that since there is only one God who created us and who continues to sustain us, then it follows logically that only this one God is worthy of worship.[285]

[281] Geoffrey Parrinder, *The West Minister Dictionary of Spirituality*, (Philadelphia: Westminister, 1983), 217.
[282] Parrinder, *The West Minister Dictionary of Spirituality*,218.
[283] *Basic Beliefs of ISLAM***,** https://www.northampton.edu/Documents/Subsites/ (Accessed on 16/10/2024).
[284] Clement Majawa, *Patristic science and education*, (Nairobi: Scroll Technogies), 256.
[285] Majawa, *Patristic science and education*, 256.

#### 2.4.2.2.2. Quranic Emphasis on Reconciliation

Reconciliation and unity are key elements emphasized in Islamic teachings, particularly in the Quran. The concept of believers forming a single brotherhood is a recurring theme, where the resolution of conflicts and the pursuit of peace are seen as essential to maintaining community harmony and spiritual growth.[286]

Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10) states "*The believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy*." This verse from the Quran asserts the vital importance of resolving conflicts through reconciliation and mediation. This verse underscores the interconnectedness of believers as a unified community, urging them to reconcile differences. By emphasizing the resolution of disputes among brethren and invoking the fear of Allah, it advocates for peaceful settlement as a means to attain divine mercy. This Quranic injunction not only promotes harmony among individuals but also highlights the spiritual significance of seeking conciliation over discord, guiding adherents toward compassion and unity.[287]

#### 2.4.2.2.3. Reconciliation in Islam amidst Jihad and Punishment

In Islam, the concept of *jihad* is often misunderstood and reduced to mere physical conflict. However, *jihad* encompasses a broad spiritual and moral struggle, with the "*greater jihad*" referring to the internal struggle against sin. Physical conflict, or the "*lesser jihad*," is permitted only in defensive circumstances and under strict ethical guidelines. The Quran emphasizes peaceful solutions, as seen in Surah Al-Anfal 8:61 *"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing."* This verse instructs believers to incline toward peace if the enemy does so. This verse highlights that reconciliation

[286] Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, (New York: Amana Publications, 2004), 1536.
[287] Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, 1536.

is preferred whenever feasible, reflecting Islam's fundamental principles of mercy and peace over conflict.[288]

Islamic law, or *Sharia*, while containing strict punishments for certain offenses, offers mechanisms for reconciliation. One such practice is *diyya*, or financial compensation, which allows for forgiveness in cases of murder or injury. This system provides an alternative to retaliation, emphasizing restorative justice over retribution. By promoting reconciliation and offering pathways for mercy, *Sharia* demonstrates its flexibility and commitment to preserving social harmony. The balance between justice and forgiveness is a reflection of the Quran's broader ethical framework, which aims to promote peace within the community.[289]

Historical and contemporary examples further illustrate Islam's commitment to reconciliation. The Prophet Muhammad's Treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*, for instance, was a significant moment when peace was chosen over further conflict, setting a precedent for future negotiations. Similarly, modern Islamic scholars and leaders emphasize the importance of reconciliation and nonviolence. In various post-conflict societies, Islamic principles of mercy and forgiveness have been instrumental in healing communities, demonstrating that reconciliation remains a central tenet of the faith across time and place.[290]

#### 2.4.2.2.4. Forgiveness and Compassion

Forgiveness and compassion stand as pivotal virtues in Islamic doctrine. Prophet Muhammad's life exemplifies an unwavering commitment to forgiveness amid challenges. His actions,

[288] Tariq Ramadan, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* (The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 2001), 219-224; Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1999), 90-94.
[289] Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* , (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2008), 144-149; Muhammad Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice*, (University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 2003), 57-63.
[290] Fethullah Gülen, *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance* (New Jersey: Tughra Books, 2010), 101-105; Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (Modern Library, New York, 2002), 39-43.

vividly portrayed in Hadith, underscore the virtue of pardoning adversaries. These instances serve as profound lessons, emphasizing the noble act of forgiving those who transgress. Islam extols this virtue, reflecting the Prophet's remarkable capacity for compassion, guiding believers to emulate this example. Such teachings advocate for a transformative approach, fostering empathy and magnanimity even when confronted with adversity, promoting inner peace and communal harmony through acts of forgiveness and compassion.[291]

**2.4.2.2.5. Role of Mediation and Arbitration**

In Islamic teachings, mediation and arbitration emerge as fundamental methods for conflict resolution. The principle of Sulh, entailing the appointment of mediators, serves as a cornerstone for resolving disputes. This concept not only facilitates peaceful settlements but also actively fosters reconciliation and harmony among opposing parties. By encouraging impartial mediation, Islam underscores the significance of dialogue and understanding, offering a pathway toward amicable resolutions that prioritize unity and concord. Such mechanisms align with the ethos of Islamic principles, promoting enduring peace and mutual respect within communities through collaborative and fair dispute resolution processes.[292]

**2.4.2.2.6. Reconciliation in Practice**

Reconciliation in Islam transcends theory, finding tangible expression in everyday life. Mosques stand as vibrant hubs for conflict resolution, embodying the practical application of reconciliation. Within these sacred spaces, esteemed community leaders and scholars convene to mediate discussions, aiming for harmonious resolutions to disputes. This proactive engagement underscores Islam's emphasis on peaceful coexistence and dialogue. By fostering an environment conducive to amicable settlements, mosques serve as catalysts for unity and understanding. The practical implementation of reconciliation within these settings amplifies

[291] Al-G7azali, *The Alchemy of Happiness, Translated by Claud Field*, (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 20.
[292] John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 277.

its significance, contributing profoundly to cohesive communities built on empathy, respect, and mutual reconciliation.[293]

#### 2.4.2.2.7. Reconciliation and Social Cohesion

Embracing reconciliation in Islam yields dual benefits nurturing individual spiritual progression while bolstering communal harmony. Peaceful conflict resolution not only fosters personal growth but also fortifies social bonds within communities. Such amicable resolutions contribute significantly to harmonious societies, fostering environments rooted in mutual respect and empathy. By embracing reconciliation as a guiding principle, Islamic teachings advocate for a society where understanding and cooperation flourish. This collective commitment to resolving conflicts peacefully cultivates a culture of harmony, laying the groundwork for cohesive communities founded on shared values of respect and understanding.[294]

### 2.5. Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda Traditional Religion

Rwandan traditional religion emphasizes holistic living, where harmony with God, spirits, humanity, and creation ensures peace. Religious specialists play vital roles as healers, mediators, and guides in restoring broken relationships.

Rwandan religious specialists were believed to have the ability to tap mystical powers in order to tackle both the physical and psychological aspects of ill-health. On the usefulness of African religious specialists, Mbiti observes "medicine-men are the friends, pastors, psychiatrists and doctors of traditional African villages and communities."[295]

[293] Mohammed Hashim Kamali, *Islamic Law and Society*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 20.
[294] John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, (New York: Gallup Press, 2007), 20-21.
[295]John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969), 171.

Within the African worldview, life is seen in its totality rather than in segments. People are at peace when their relationship with God, the spirits, other people and the rest of creation is good.[296] A broken relationship spells disaster for the individual, and, by extension, for the rest of the family and society at large. Consequently, a remedy has to be sought to bring back the wholeness of life to the people. This process of making right the wrongs responsible for the sufferings can be seen as a healing process in which an attempt is made to mend broken relationships.[297]

### 2.5.1. Healing in Rwandan traditional religion

Rwandan healing in ancient times often relied on *Kuragura*[298], the art of uncovering hidden causes of afflictions. Practiced by the esteemed *umupfumu*, this process bridged the natural and supernatural realms, addressing illness, misfortune, and spiritual unrest to restore harmony.[299] If the medication prescribed by the healers did not yield the healing hoped for, the harm was understood to come from an unknown cause, which in turn suggested that the supernatural had invaded the natural order of things. Alex Kagame referred to such as a "Being of Intelligence" (Etre d' Intelligence) which was at work, using the ill-happening to exact vengeance or demand a service. In this case, a specialist of the unknown, *umupfumu*, was called upon to reveal the hidden cause and identify the causal link between the observable effect and the principle that had to be discovered.[300]

At this point, it seems important to shed more light on this character whose preponderance in the social, cultural, political and spiritual life of the Rwandans could never be overemphasized.

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[296] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 172.
[297] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy,171.*
[298] In Rwandan traditional religion, **Kuragura** refers to the practice of divination or spiritual diagnosis used to identify the cause of illness, misfortune, or other life challenges. It is an integral part of traditional healing and involves seeking insight from spiritual forces, ancestors, or other supernatural entities to uncover hidden causes of a problem.
[299] Alex Kagame , *La philososphie Bantu-rwandaise de l'Etre, (*Bruxelles: Académie Royale des Sciences Coloniales:, 1958) , 289.
[300] Kagame , *La philososphie Bantu-rwandaise de l'Etre,* 289.

The word "*Umupfumu*" comes from *Gupfumura,* to pierce, to drill through a wall[301]. However, Rwandans held authentic *Umupfumu* in the highest esteem, going as far as considering them as "*Umubyeyi*" (parent figure). This popular respect was due to the fact that a genuine *Umupfumu* was reliable to fulfill the functions of healer and spiritual leader. *Abapfumu* considered their insights as a gift from *Imana* and for this reason their craft was at the service of good causes only. They passed to the offensive only to prevent an attack. *Umupfumu* was not a priest or a minister of a cult in the strictest sense, considering there was no organized cult of any form in the country. Like the rest of the population, they made sacrifices for themselves. However, their importance in the secure well being of the communities; spiritual, physical and political, was unequalled.[302]

The two principal functions that made *Umupfumu* so indispensable in ancient Rwanda were revealing the hidden (*Kuragura*) and healing. In the presence of disaster, illness or any other form of harm for which a cause could not be determined, *Umupfumu* was immediately consulted because he/she was able to provide the means to appease a trouble soul, to cajole and win over a vindictive *Umuzimu/ Imandwa*. It was in his/her powers to nullify evil spells, save lives and properties or prevent unintended offences towards the spirits.[303]

The intervention of *Umupfumu* could lead to one of at least three solutions or *Indagu.* In the first place, he/ she could pinpoint the illness/ disease that was affecting the patient. In that case, she/he could provide the medication or refer to a specialist[304]. In the second case, *Umupfumu* could uncover the evil intervention of a practitioner of dark magic provide the counter measures

[301] De Lacger, *Le Ruanda Ancien*, (Gitarama: Kabgayi, 1939), 304.
[302] De Lacger, *Le Ruanda Ancien*, 306.
[303] De Lacger, *Le Ruanda Ancien*, 103.
[304] There was a variety of such specialists: *Umuvuzi* (medical healer), *Umugangahuzi* (specialist in cases involving people struck by thunder), *Umuholyo* (property targeted by thunder), *Umupyisi* (in the case of cattle loss due to wild animals), *Umuvubyi* (in the event of drought) or *Umuyege* (attack by locusts).

to the evil spells. The third situation, and the most common, was when *Umupfumu* had to deal with the spirit of a dead person who was attacking the patient for a given reason.

### 2.5.2. Reconciliation in Rwandan traditional religion

Guterekera[305] is founded on the belief in life after death and the ongoing relationship between the living and the dead. Similarly, reconciliation rests on the acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of individuals and communities across time and circumstances. It teaches us that broken relationships, whether with the living or the deceased, can be healed when the bonds of mutual recognition and memory are restored.

Reconciliation begins with acknowledging harm and understanding the reasons behind hostility or suffering. In guterekera, the *Umupfumu* identifies the nature of the offense, the hostile *Muzimu* involved, and the actions necessary to repair the relationship. Even though *guterekera* could be suggested by *Umupfumu*, it was generally a daily ritual practiced in almost every household. In fact, within the *Banyarwanda* system of belief, the mystic interaction with the spirits of the deceased monopolized the external and public cult so much so that an ill-advised observer would believe that they constituted the whole of the traditional religion.[306]

The offering of *Igitambo* (sacrifice) and the cajoling words like "Seka, Seka, Gororoka" reflect a deep desire to appease and heal. This demonstrates the power of symbolic acts in mending

[305] ***Guterekera*** is deeply rooted in Rwandan traditional spirituality and culture. It involves offering a sacrifice, typically as part of a ritual, to honor ancestors, seek blessings, offer thanksgiving, or address misfortunes. The practice reflects the belief in the interconnectedness of the living, the spiritual realm, and the ancestors. Sacrifices are seen as a way to maintain harmony within this interconnected relationship, ensuring peace, protection, and prosperity for individuals and their communities. Common offerings in *guterekera* include livestock such as goats, cows, or chickens, along with grains or locally brewed banana beer, which symbolize respect and devotion. Additionally, *guterekera* often serves to restore broken relationships with spirits, ancestors, or the community, emphasizing the holistic nature of life in Rwandan culture, where spiritual and communal well-being are deeply intertwined.

[306] However, De Lacger is adamant that what he calls a 'mediocre religion' did not cancel the more discrete and less explicit cult of *Imana*. 'The power of *Imana* presides over these diverse manifestations and envelops them with an aura of the supernatural'. See De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 191.

relationships. Regarding the former, it appears that the happiness of *Umuzimu* in their new universe depended on being remembered by the living. This memory was acted out, among others, through offerings of food and drinks and the building of a dueling (*Indaro*) for the *Umuzimu*. Being forgotten in the afterlife was a terrifying eventuality and seems to have been one of the main reasons why ancient Rwandans dreaded to die without leaving a descendant, referred to as "*Kuba incike*" or even more sinister, "*Guhambanywa ikara*".[307]

On the other hand, *Umuzimu* was a powerful spirit who could move everywhere freely. In this capacity, they offered protection to their living relatives and friends. However, opposite was also true; they could launch dangerous attacks on these same people if they forgot to honour them. Pauwels provides two main categories of *Abazimu:* Those related to the family, "*Abazimu b'umuryango*", and those external to the family, "*Abazimu b' indengaryango*". Rwandans behaved differently depending on whether they were in the presence of a friendly *Umuzimu* or in the presence of a hostile one.[308]

Reconciliation after genocide mirrors Rwanda's *guterekera* tradition, emphasizing healing through recognition, memory, and symbolic acts like offerings. Acknowledging harm and restoring bonds fosters unity. Just as honored spirits protect and forgotten ones retaliate, reconciliation thrives when dignity is restored, helping Rwanda heal its past and build a peaceful, united future.

[307] Lit. *being buried with an extinguished charcoal.* On the importance of having an heir who would honour one's *Umuzimu* see an interesting anecdote provided by De Lacger, *Ruanda,* 200-1.
[308] Marcel Pauwels, *Imana et le Culte des Mânes au Rwanda (*Bruxelles:Académie Royale des Sciences Coloniales, 1958),105.

**1ntegrative Reflection**

The journey of healing and reconciliation in Rwanda after the genocide reflects a profound and multifaceted process that draws upon philosophy, psychology, anthropology, theology, and cultural traditions. This transformative journey involves addressing broken relationships, restoring trust, and achieving unity within individuals, communities, and the nation.

Philosophers have long sought to reconcile opposing viewpoints, emphasizing healing and unity as pathways to societal progress. This synthesis involves resolving contradictions to forge a harmonious framework for philosophical inquiry and human advancement. Hegel and Julius Kambarage Nyerere offer compelling insights into the dynamics of healing and reconciliation. Hegel's philosophy underscores reconciliation as a transformative process inherent in existence. Central to his dialectical method, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis is the idea of overcoming contradictions to reach higher unity. For Hegel, reconciliation involves not eliminating conflicts but integrating them into a new, harmonious whole. This principle applies across individual consciousness, social structures, and historical evolution, where progress stems from acknowledging and integrating tensions. He viewed reconciliation as vital to achieving freedom and self-awareness, culminating in the realization of "Geist" (spirit) and ethical community life.

Julius Nyerere championed reconciliation through Ujamaa (African socialism), rooted in unity, brotherhood, and equality. Advocating for post-colonial healing, he promoted dialogue and solidarity, transcending tribal divisions to foster national and regional cohesion. Nyerere's leadership embodied the principles of hope and mutual respect, emphasizing the collective

responsibility to build harmonious societies. His vision remains a guiding light for healing efforts in post-conflict contexts.

Psychologists play a crucial role in fostering reconciliation and healing by addressing the psychological dimensions of trauma, identity, and interpersonal relationships. Their approaches emphasize empathy, forgiveness, and unity, which are vital in restoring individual and collective well-being. Notable contributors in this field, such as Judith Lewis Herman and Carl Rogers, have offered profound insights into the processes of trauma recovery and reconciliation.

Judith Lewis Herman, a leading figure in trauma psychology, emphasizes the importance of unity and reconciliation in healing. Her work highlights the role of community support, forgiveness as a personal choice, and conflict resolution in rebuilding fractured relationships. Herman views healing as both an individual and collective process, requiring the restoration of social bonds and communal trust.

Carl Rogers, a pioneer of humanistic psychology, focuses on empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard as key elements of healing. His person-centered therapy fosters an accepting and empathetic environment where individuals can explore their emotions and work towards self-actualization. Rogers underscores the transformative power of authentic relationships in bridging divisions and promoting reconciliation.

Together, their insights demonstrate how psychological principles can address trauma, promote understanding, and guide individuals and communities toward healing and reconciliation.

Anthropology provides a critical lens through which cultural, spiritual, and societal elements of reconciliation can be examined. Anthropologists delve into how various cultures foster peace and unity in the aftermath of conflict. The contributions of Charles Nyamiti and Clement

Majawa are central, offering profound insights into reconciliation from an African theological and anthropological perspective.

Charles Nyamiti, a Tanzanian theologian and cultural anthropologist, pioneered the integration of African traditional thought and Christian theology. His exploration of ancestral models and Trinitarian harmony provides a framework that underscores unity and relational healing. Through his ancestral Christology, Nyamiti bridges spirituality and social cohesion, offering a theological foundation for reconciliation.

Similarly, Clement Majawa, a Malawian scholar, enriches the discourse with his focus on forgiveness, reconciliation, and the African cosmotheandrian worldview. Highlighting traditional practices of the Yao community, Majawa emphasizes the communal nature of reconciliation, rooted in divine and human interconnectedness. His insights reveal reconciliation as a holistic process involving spiritual, social, and emotional restoration.

Together, the works of Nyamiti and Majawa provide invaluable anthropological and theological perspectives, illuminating pathways to healing, unity, and peace in African societies and beyond. Their contributions remain pivotal in shaping reconciliation frameworks, particularly in contexts marked by division and conflict.

Reconciliation in world religions plays a critical role in fostering peace and healing within societies. Both Judaism and Islam emphasize forgiveness, harmony, and restoring broken relationships, offering valuable lessons for post-conflict reconciliation processes, such as those in Rwanda.

Judaism, with its long history and deep roots in the covenant between God and the Jewish people, stresses the importance of repentance and restoration. The concept of *Teshuvah* (return) teaches individuals to acknowledge wrongdoings, seek forgiveness, and make amends, which

is exemplified in stories like Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers. These teachings highlight the profound impact of forgiveness in healing communal wounds.

Similarly, Islam, founded on the principles of justice and compassion, emphasizes reconciliation as a means to resolve conflicts. The Quran encourages believers to seek peace and unity, as seen in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10), which calls for mediation and the restoration of harmony within the community. Islam's focus on resolving disputes through dialogue aligns closely with efforts for unity in post-genocide societies like Rwanda.

Both Judaism and Islam offer valuable frameworks for reconciliation, teaching that healing and peace can only be achieved through understanding, forgiveness, and the commitment to restoring relationships. These religious principles are essential for the ongoing efforts to heal and rebuild communities after conflict.

African traditional religion emphasizes holistic living, where harmony with God, spirits, humanity, and creation ensures peace. Religious specialists, such as healers and mediators, play vital roles in restoring broken relationships. They are believed to possess mystical powers to address both physical and psychological aspects of ill-health. According to Mbiti, "medicine-men are the friends, pastors, psychiatrists and doctors of traditional African villages."

In African thought, life is seen as interconnected, and peace is achieved when relationships with the divine, spirits, and others are harmonious. A broken relationship brings suffering not just to the individual, but also to the wider community. Therefore, it is crucial to restore wholeness through reconciliation, which involves healing broken relationships.

In Rwandan tradition, *Kuragura* is used to uncover hidden causes of illness and misfortune, often involving the guidance of an *Umupfumu*, a highly respected spiritual healer. Reconciliation in Rwandan tradition, embodied in *Guterekera,* emphasizes restoring bonds

with both the living and deceased, highlighting the importance of memory, symbolic acts, and the interdependence of individuals across generations.

The post-genocide reconciliation process in Rwanda is a testament to the universal human capacity for healing and unity. By integrating philosophical insights, psychological principles, religious teachings, and traditional cultural practices, Rwanda has embarked on a transformative journey to rebuild a society marked by justice, empathy, and shared responsibility. This holistic approach not only addresses the wounds of the past but also lays the foundation for a peaceful and united future.

## CHAPTER THREE:RECONCILIATION AND HEALING IN RWANDAN CONTEXT

### Introduction

Reconciliation in Rwanda is deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and spiritual traditions. Before colonial rule, social structures and spiritual beliefs promoted conflict resolution and unity. However, colonial influence and the 1994 genocide disrupted these mechanisms, creating a need for new approaches. Post-genocide reconciliation combined traditional justice, such as *Gacaca*, with religious and social efforts to restore relationships. This chapter examines reconciliation from its pre-colonial roots to contemporary healing processes, emphasizing the truth, apology, and forgiveness.

### 3.1. Reconciliation in Rwanda in the pre-colonial period

The reconciliation process in Rwanda delves into pre-colonial socio-political structures, spiritual and cultural practices, inter-clan relations, and conflict resolution mechanisms. It aims to heal familial rifts and reconcile historical grievances to build a cohesive and harmonious society.

#### 3.1.1 Pre-Colonial Socio-Political Structures

In pre-colonial Rwanda, reconciliation was deeply rooted in the kingdom's socio-political structures, which emphasized unity, harmony, and the resolution of disputes through well-established traditional mechanisms. Central to these efforts was the king, known as the *Umwami*. As both a spiritual and political leader, the *Umwami* was regarded as a divine mediator entrusted with maintaining peace and justice across the kingdom. Disputes between clans or individuals were often presented before the *Umwami*, who relied on the wisdom of his councilors, the *Abiru*, and customary laws to guide his judgments. The role of the *Umwami* was not only to resolve conflicts but also to ensure the long-term restoration of harmony within the community.

The concept of *ubwiru* (sacred rituals and royal customs) further anchored reconciliation practices within the socio-political framework. The *Abiru*, as custodians of these royal customs, were instrumental in resolving disputes within the monarchy and among royal officials. For instance, if a chief or sub-chief faced accusations of misconduct, the *Abiru* would conduct an inquiry using traditional methods, including communal dialogue and testimony collection. Once the truth was established, purification rituals would follow, symbolizing the restoration of both the individual and the community to a harmonious state. These practices demonstrated how deeply reconciliation was embedded in the fabric of governance and societal norms.[309]

Beyond the monarchy, communal reconciliation mechanisms such as the *Inteko y'Abakuru b'Imiryango* (Council of Elders) played a critical role in mediating conflicts. This council, composed of respected elders, addressed disputes ranging from land conflicts to interpersonal disagreements. For example, in cases of land encroachment, the council convened at a neutral location to hear testimonies from both parties. Guided by oral traditions, local knowledge of boundaries, and community consensus, the elders worked toward fair and binding resolutions. By ensuring that decisions were respected and upheld, this council fostered a collective responsibility for maintaining peace.[310]

Another mechanism of reconciliation was the *Imihigo* (performance contracts), which originated as formal agreements between the *Umwami* and his chiefs. These agreements emphasized accountability, unity, and collaboration in governing their territories. Chiefs were expected to promote reconciliation, mediate local disputes, and uphold their allegiance to the kingdom. In instances where disputes escalated beyond the chiefs' jurisdiction, they referred

[309] Alex Kagame, *The Traditional Rwanda: History and Socio-Political Organization*, (Kigali: Editions Universitaires du Rwanda, 1952), 38.
[310]Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004),41.

them to higher authorities, including the *Umwami*. This system not only maintained social order but also reinforced the chiefs' roles as custodians of peace and reconciliation.[311]

Additionally, symbolic acts of reconciliation were widely practiced in pre-colonial Rwanda, reflecting the value placed on restoring trust and unity. The *Kunywana* ritual,[312] for example, was a significant tradition involving public gestures of forgiveness and peacebuilding. In situations where two families or communities had been feuding, they would come together to participate in a shared meal and exchange symbolic gifts, such as cows, bananas, or sorghum beer. This act of sharing and gift-giving signified a renewed commitment to harmony and reinforced the bonds that held the community together. Such rituals demonstrated the collective effort required to sustain peace and highlighted the deeply ingrained culture of reconciliation in Rwandan society.[313]

### 3.1.2 Spiritual and Cultural Practices of Reconciliation

Religious and cultural practices held significant importance in pre-colonial Rwanda, serving as integral components of reconciliation efforts. Rituals and ceremonies were deeply intertwined with communal life, providing occasions for collective healing and restoration of communal bonds. These ceremonies often took place at sacred sites and involved elaborate rituals conducted by religious leaders and community members alike.[314]Through these rituals,

[311] Kagame, *The Traditional Rwanda, 39.*
[312] In pre-colonial Rwanda, *Kunywana* could also involve the use of symbolic blood rituals to seal the reconciliation between two feuding parties. Blood held a powerful and sacred significance in Rwandan tradition, representing life, kinship, and the deepest form of commitment. When blood was incorporated into the *kunywana* process, it emphasized the seriousness of the reconciliation and the irrevocable nature of the peace agreement. For example, in some cases, a small cut would be made on the hands or arms of representatives from the conflicting parties. The individuals would mix their blood, symbolizing that they were now bound as one family. This act signified the end of hostilities and created a lasting bond that transcended previous grievances. It reinforced the idea that any future conflict would be akin to fighting one's own blood relative, which was culturally unacceptable.
[313] Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 57.
[314] Charles Taylor , *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 103.

individuals were able to connect with Supreme being and ancestral spirits and seek guidance and protection, fostering a sense of spiritual unity and belonging within the community.[315]

### 3.1.2.1 Reconciliation with the Supreme Being

In pre-colonial Rwanda, reconciliation with the Supreme Being, *Imana*, was deeply rooted in the spiritual worldview of the people. *Imana* was regarded as the creator and sustainer of life, and all moral and social order was believed to originate from divine will. Disruptions to this order, such as conflicts, injustices, or moral failings, were seen as offenses against *Imana*, requiring reconciliation to restore harmony. As Kagame states, "The relationship between humanity and *Imana* was governed by a deep sense of reverence, where the ultimate goal was to align human actions with divine expectations".[316]

Prayers (*gusenga*) directed to *Imana* were central to this reconciliation. These prayers were often offered by individuals or communities during moments of crisis or thanksgiving. They were highly personal and heartfelt expressions of dependence on *Imana's* providence and mercy. For instance, during a drought, community members would gather to collectively pray for rain, acknowledging their reliance on *Imana's* favor for survival. Prayer was a bridge between humanity and *Imana*, reflecting both submission and the hope for divine intervention.[317]

The celebration of *Umuganura* (the First Fruits Festival) was one of the most profound ways in which reconciliation with *Imana* was demonstrated. This festival was not merely a thanksgiving event but a deliberate act of restoring harmony with the divine. By offering the first portion of the harvest to *Imana*, the community symbolically sought forgiveness for any

[315] Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*,104.
[316] Alexis Kagame, *The Culture of Rwanda: A Historical and Religious Perspective*, (Kigali: Editions Universitaires du Rwanda, 1952), 15.
[317]Kagame, *The Culture of Rwanda*, 17.

failings during the year and reaffirmed their dependence on the Supreme Being. This act of offering represented a renewal of the covenant between the people and *Imana*, ensuring that the blessings of the land were aligned with divine favor. Kagame explains, "Through the communal offering of first fruits, Rwandans expressed both their gratitude and their commitment to reconciling with *Imana* for any missteps that might have disrupted divine harmony".[318]

The concept of obedience to *Imana*'s moral order was another key element of reconciliation. It was believed that living in accordance with *Imana*'s laws ensured blessings, while disobedience brought misfortune. Leaders, such as the king (*Umwami*), emphasized the importance of upholding justice and fairness as acts of devotion to *Imana*. For example, unjust actions like theft or betrayal were seen as violations of divine law, requiring not only restitution but also public acknowledgment of wrongdoing and prayers for forgiveness. As Vansina observes, "Moral integrity was intrinsically tied to divine favor, making reconciliation with *Imana* a societal priority".[319]

The emphasis on collective accountability to *Imana* further reinforced reconciliation. It was believed that the actions of one individual could disrupt the entire community's relationship with the Supreme Being. For instance, if a member of the community committed an egregious offense, rituals of communal reconciliation were performed to seek *Imana*'s forgiveness on behalf of everyone. This collective responsibility created a strong sense of unity and underscored the belief that harmony with *Imana* was the foundation of social cohesion. Reconciliation with *Imana* was not just a personal journey but a communal endeavor to maintain divine favor and peace.[320]

[318] Kagame, *The Culture of Rwanda*, 19.
[319] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 29.
[320] Kagame, *The Culture of Rwanda*, 22.

These practices illustrate the central role of *Imana* in pre-colonial Rwanda's spiritual and social life. Through prayer, moral obedience, gratitude in festivals, and communal accountability, the people of Rwanda sought to remain in harmony with the Supreme Being. Their dedication to maintaining this divine relationship underscores the profound integration of faith and daily life in pre-colonial society.

#### 3.1.2.2 Reconciliation with Ancestors

In pre-colonial Rwanda, reconciliation with ancestors (*Abakurambere*) was a fundamental practice for maintaining harmony within families and communities. Ancestors were regarded as spiritual intermediaries who could intercede with *Imana* (the Supreme Being) on behalf of the living. It was believed that their displeasure could manifest in misfortunes such as illness, famine, or discord, particularly when conflicts disrupted the moral order within a family or lineage. To restore harmony, rituals were performed to appease the ancestors and seek their blessings. For example, if a family member disrespected an elder or violated a cultural taboo, offerings were made at a sacred family shrine to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with the spirits. These rituals underscored the importance of unity and respect for tradition.[321]

One of the most significant rituals for reconciling with ancestors was the *Kwitazirwa* ceremony. This ritual involved invoking the names of ancestors to seek their blessings and guidance, particularly during moments of conflict resolution. In this process, all parties were required to publicly acknowledge their wrongdoings before calling upon the ancestors for forgiveness. For instance, during disputes over inheritance, family elders would convene at the family shrine, invoke the spirits of their forebears, and seek their approval for a resolution. By aligning their

[321]Alex Kagame, *The Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of Rwanda*, (Kigali: Editions Universitaires du Rwanda, 1972), 47.

actions with the expectations of the ancestors, the living not only reconciled with the spiritual realm but also fostered justice and accountability within the family.[322]

Divination was another crucial means of reconciling with ancestors. When families or communities faced persistent misfortune, they often sought the guidance of a diviner or *Umupfumu*. The diviner would interpret signs and reveal whether ancestral spirits were displeased due to unresolved conflicts or violations of tradition. For example, if a family failed to properly honor a deceased member, the diviner might recommend specific rituals or sacrifices to restore harmony with the spirits. This practice emphasized respect for the ancestors and accountability for the actions of the living. It also reinforced cultural values, as reconciliation with ancestors was seen as vital to the well-being of both individuals and the community.[323]

Another significant ritual for reconciling with ancestors was the *Kuganira ku Ngoma* ceremony, which combined drumming and storytelling to invoke ancestral spirits and seek their guidance. This ritual was particularly important after major disputes or communal crises, such as land disagreements or cases of theft. By recounting the lineage's history and values through oral traditions, participants reaffirmed their connection to their ancestors and their commitment to ancestral expectations. For example, in a conflict between two extended families that disrupted community harmony, the *Kuganira ku Ngoma* ceremony not only facilitated spiritual reconciliation but also served as a powerful reminder of the collective identity rooted in ancestral heritage. This ritual highlighted the dual goal of reconciliation: restoring peace with the spiritual realm and ensuring social cohesion within the community.[324]

[322] Kagame, *The Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of Rwanda,* 50.
[323] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 65.
[324] Alison Des Forges, *Defeat is the Only Bad News: Rwanda under Musinga, 1896–1931,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 89.

### 3.1.3 Inter-Clan Relations and Conflict Resolution

In pre-colonial Rwanda, clans (*ubwoko*) were the primary social units that shaped identity, kinship, and governance. Each clan had its own totems, rituals, and traditions, fostering a sense of unity among its members. Clans also played a critical role in governance, with chiefs (*abatware*) and sub-chiefs (*abakarani*) often drawn from prominent clans. Despite their unifying functions, inter-clan disputes were common, arising from competition over land, cattle, or political influence. Resolving these disputes was crucial for maintaining societal harmony and avoiding prolonged conflicts that could destabilize the kingdom. Central to this process was the role of the *Umwami* (king), who served as an impartial mediator.[325]

According to Jan Vansina, conflict resolution between clans was typically achieved through structured negotiations mediated by elders or royal officials. When disputes arose, representatives from the feuding clans would gather in neutral locations to discuss their grievances. This process, known as *gucurabwenge* (sharing wisdom), relied on dialogue and mutual respect. In land disputes, both sides would present evidence such as oral testimonies and community landmarks. A resolution was reached based on consensus, and symbolic acts like the exchange of cattle or shared meals were used to seal the agreement. These mechanisms not only resolved immediate conflicts but also reinforced inter-clan solidarity.[326]

Alison Des Forges adds that inter-clan marriages also played a significant role in mitigating tensions and fostering reconciliation. Marriages between members of rival clans were often arranged to strengthen alliances and prevent future conflicts. If two clans had a history of disputes, the union of prominent members from each clan would be celebrated as a gesture of peace. These marriages were accompanied by elaborate ceremonies, including the exchange of

[325] Alex Kagame, *Un aperçu sur l'histoire du Rwanda: Essai de synthèse, (*Kigali: Éditions Universitaires du Rwanda, 1951),32.
[326] Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom, (*Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 64.

dowries and blessings from elders, symbolizing the restoration of harmony. Such practices underscored the importance of kinship and collective responsibility in maintaining peace within the kingdom.[327]

Beyond these practices, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in pre-colonial Rwanda also involved community-based mediation by *abunzi* (mediators). As highlighted in a monograph on integrating traditional and modern conflict resolution, *abunzi* were ordinary community members called upon to resolve disputes among fellow community members. They played a crucial role in mediating conflicts at the grassroots level, ensuring that minor disputes did not escalate into larger inter-clan conflicts. This system emphasized restorative justice and reconciliation, reflecting the communal values of Rwandan society.[328]

The pre-colonial period in Rwanda saw the emergence of influential mediators and peacemakers[329] who played pivotal roles in resolving inter-clan conflicts and fostering reconciliation. These mediators, often drawn from the ranks of respected elders and religious leaders, possessed a deep understanding of clan dynamics and cultural norms, enabling them to facilitate dialogue and negotiation processes aimed at finding mutually acceptable solutions

[327] Alison Des Forges, *Defeat Is the Only Bad News: Rwanda under Musinga, 1896-1931,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011),76.
[328] *Integrating Traditional and Modern Conflict Resolution: Experiences from Selected Cases in Eastern and the Horn of Africa.* ACCORD Monograph Series, No. 2, 2012.
[329] The mediators and peacemakers in pre-colonial Rwanda were often individuals who held significant influence and respect within their communities. They were typically drawn from the ranks of respected elders, religious leaders, or individuals with notable diplomatic skills. One prominent group of mediators were the "Abanyamurenge," who were renowned for their ability to arbitrate disputes and reconcile conflicting parties. These individuals were selected based on their wisdom, impartiality, and knowledge of customary laws and traditions. Cfr.Chrétien, J. P. (2003).
Another group of influential mediators were the "Abashyitsi," or royal counselors, who served as advisors to the king and played key roles in maintaining peace and stability within the kingdom. These counselors often acted as intermediaries in inter-clan disputes, leveraging their close ties to the monarchy and their understanding of political dynamics to facilitate negotiations and resolve conflicts. Cfr. Newbury, C. (2001).
Religious leaders, such as priests and diviners, also played significant roles as mediators in pre-colonial Rwanda. They were respected for their spiritual wisdom and were often called upon to intervene in disputes that had deep-seated cultural or supernatural dimensions. By invoking religious principles and rituals, these leaders sought to promote reconciliation and restore harmony within communities. Cfr. Allen, J. L. (2012).

to disputes. Their efforts not only helped to prevent the escalation of conflicts but also contributed to the maintenance of social cohesion and stability within Rwandan society.[330]

Additionally, trade relations provided opportunities for clans to interact and engage in mutually beneficial exchanges, fostering trust and goodwill among trading partners. Through these economic interactions, clans were able to establish common ground and build relationships based on shared interests.[331]

Mutual defense agreements also played a crucial role in promoting cooperation and conflict resolution among clans in pre-colonial Rwanda. By forming alliances for mutual protection, clans could deter aggression from external threats and uphold peace within their territories. These alliances relied on trust and reciprocity, as clans committed to supporting one another in times of need and cooperating to address security challenges collectively. In this way, mutual defense agreements served as a mechanism for fostering solidarity and promoting stability within the region.[332]

Moreover, informal networks and alliances provided platforms for dialogue and negotiation, enabling clans to address common challenges and resolve conflicts through peaceful means. By leveraging their social connections and shared interests, clans could engage in diplomatic exchanges and mediation processes to settle disputes and reconcile differences.[333] Through these informal channels, conflicts were often resolved before they escalated into violence, as clans sought to preserve their relationships and maintain stability within the broader community.

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[330] Anthony Mugabo, "Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Pre-Colonial Rwanda," *in African History*, vol. 25, no. 2, (2017), 140.
[331]Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, 34-35.
[332] Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, 34.
[333] Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, 35.

### 3.1.4 Reconciliation within the Families

In pre-colonial Rwanda, family reconciliation was a deeply ingrained social practice aimed at maintaining unity and harmony within extended family structures. The Rwandan society was built on kinship ties, where conflicts were seen as threats to communal stability. Therefore, traditional mechanisms ensured that disputes within families were resolved swiftly to prevent division and maintain the well-being of the lineage. These mechanisms were influenced by cultural values, oral traditions, and the role of elders in mediating conflicts.[334]

Elders played a pivotal role in family reconciliation by acting as mediators in disputes between spouses, siblings, or extended family members. Their authority was rooted in wisdom, experience, and moral standing within the community. They would listen to both sides of the conflict and offer solutions based on traditional norms, emphasizing forgiveness and the restoration of relationships rather than punishment.[335]

Beyond their role as mediators, elders were also custodians of customary law, ensuring that reconciliation processes adhered to established traditions. Their decisions carried weight because they were based on long-standing precedents that reinforced social harmony. Elders balanced justice with compassion, encouraging dialogue and compromise over retribution. For instance, in cases where a dispute arose between brothers over inheritance, elders would not simply divide the property but would first remind them of the family's ancestral ties. They might require the disputing parties to work together on a communal task, such as rebuilding a family hut, symbolizing their interdependence. In more severe cases, reconciliation might involve a ritual, such as the sharing of banana beer (*urwagwa*) to signify the restoration of trust. Such customs ensured that family bonds remained strong despite conflicts.[336]

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[334] Alexis Kagame, *La Philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise*, (Kigali: Editions Universitaires du Rwanda, 1956), 45.
[335] Mathieu Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 103.
[336] Vansina, 110.

Among the most common reconciliation practices was *gucurira*, a ritual that involved symbolic acts such as sharing milk or beer to signify the restoration of trust. This ritual emphasized that family members should not hold grudges and should resume their roles within the household. Such symbolic actions reinforced the belief that reconciliation was not just a verbal agreement but a renewal of kinship bonds. If two brothers had quarreled over land disputes, the elders would call for a *gucurira* ceremony where they would drink from the same calabash of milk. This act signified that, just as milk nourishes life, their bond as brothers should remain unbroken.[337]

The practice of *gucurira* was not limited to private family disputes but was also a communal affair where neighbors and extended relatives played a role in ensuring lasting peace. When conflicts between spouses arose, for example, female elders often the mothers or aunts of the couple would oversee the reconciliation process. They might prepare a meal to be shared by the couple, symbolizing unity and the nurturing nature of marriage. In cases of disputes between entire families, a communal feast was arranged where elders from both sides would bless the gathering, and a respected elder would pour a libation of beer on the ground as an offering to the ancestors. This act was meant to seek divine approval for the reconciliation and remind the disputing parties of their shared lineage and responsibilities within the community.[338]

In cases of marital disputes, families played an active role in ensuring reconciliation. When misunderstandings arose, the elders from both the husband's and wife's families would intervene before matters escalated to separation. This system discouraged divorce and encouraged couples to find peaceful solutions, reinforcing the value of marriage as a lifelong

[337] Jean Pierre Chrétien, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Deux mille ans d'histoire*, (Paris: Aubier, 2000), 214.
[338] Chrétien, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Deux mille ans d'histoire*, 119.

commitment. For example, if a wife felt mistreated by her husband, her maternal uncle would be called upon to mediate. He would remind the husband of his marital obligations and advise the wife on patience and resilience, emphasizing the collective responsibility of both families in maintaining harmony.[339]

While male elders often played a formal role in dispute resolution, women especially elderly mothers and aunts held a crucial position in marital mediation. When a couple faced difficulties, the wife's mother or elder female relatives would visit her to offer guidance and emotional support. In some cases, a respected elder woman known as *umuhamya w'urugo* (witness of the household) would intervene, speaking privately with both spouses to understand their grievances and suggest ways to restore harmony. If the conflict was serious, she might organize a symbolic act, such as sharing food or weaving a basket together, to represent unity and cooperation. This role of women in mediation demonstrated the importance of maternal wisdom in conflict resolution and ensured that reconciliation efforts were not one-sided.[340]

When conflicts involved material damage or wrongdoing, compensation was a common means of reconciliation. For instance, if a family member caused harm to another, the offender's family might offer livestock or other goods as a way to restore peace. This practice, deeply embedded in the concept of *ubupfura* (nobility of character), aimed to mend broken relationships rather than alienate individuals.[341]

Women, particularly mothers and aunts (*ba nyirasenge*), played a significant role in promoting peace within the household. They often acted as informal mediators, advising their children,

[339] Assumpta Mugiraneza, *Les Systèmes de Médiation Traditionnelle au Rwanda*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 78.
[340] Mugiraneza, *Les Systèmes de Médiation Traditionnelle au Rwanda*, 82.
[341] Donald E. Miller, *Rwanda: The Path to Reconciliation*, (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 2001), 65.

siblings, and in-laws on conflict resolution. Their role in fostering unity was rooted in the belief that women were custodians of harmony and moral guidance in the family.[342]

### 3.2. Reconciliation in Rwanda in the Post-Genocide Period

Reconciliation in a post-genocide context is a complex and painful process, requiring both structural and interpersonal efforts to restore trust and rebuild relationships. After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, reconciliation became a national priority to heal the deep wounds left by violence and division. Various mechanisms, including grassroots initiatives and legal structures, were implemented to foster unity and justice. The journey toward reconciliation continues to evolve, balancing justice, truth, and forgiveness.[343]

#### 3.2.1 Unity and Reconciliatory Expressions

The process of reconciliation after genocide relies heavily on fostering unity through various expressions of social and religious interaction. In Rwanda, traditional values and cultural frameworks have played a significant role in mending broken relationships. The government, religious institutions, and local communities have actively promoted dialogue, forgiveness, and peaceful coexistence. One of the key aspects of this reconciliation is the emphasis on collective responsibility and shared identity, which encourages survivors and former perpetrators to rebuild trust.[344]

Religious narratives have been instrumental in shaping reconciliatory expressions. Christian teachings, particularly the message of forgiveness and healing, have provided a spiritual foundation for unity. Many survivors and offenders have participated in communal prayers,

[342] Philippe Denis and Cyprien Rugimbana, *The Role of Women in Traditional Rwandan Society*, (Kigali: IRDP, 2015), 92.
[343] Jean Damascène Bizimana, *Rwanda: Reconciliation Process and Justice after Genocide*, (Kigali: National Commission for the Fight against Genocide, 2017), 45.
[344] Phil Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 87.

testimonies, and healing sessions, reinforcing the belief that reconciliation is not only a social necessity but also a moral and spiritual duty.[345] As one genocide survivor stated, "Forgiveness was not easy, but I realized that without it, I remained a prisoner of my past. It was only when I forgave that I truly felt free."[346] The scriptural teaching on love and forgiveness have been frequently cited to encourage genuine repentance and reconciliation.

Beyond religious expressions, cultural and artistic initiatives have contributed to unity. Traditional songs, dance, and poetry have been used to convey messages of peace and coexistence. These artistic expressions serve as therapeutic tools, helping individuals process trauma while promoting a collective memory that values peace over revenge. Through storytelling and cultural performances, communities have redefined their identity, moving from division to harmony. For example, *Ingando* (solidarity camps) have been effective platforms where both survivors and former perpetrators engage in discussions, share experiences, and embrace national unity.[347]

The role of community dialogues cannot be overlooked in the reconciliation process. These forums have provided a safe space for open conversations between victims and perpetrators. By openly acknowledging past atrocities and seeking forgiveness, individuals take crucial steps toward rebuilding social cohesion. Many of these conversations are facilitated by community leaders and clergy, ensuring that reconciliation is rooted in truth and accountability. As Clark notes,

> Dialogue is the bridge through which past enemies can walk towards mutual understanding and, ultimately, reconciliation. Without open conversations, past wounds remain unhealed, and justice is incomplete. In Rwanda's post-genocide context, dialogue has enabled individuals to transform their pain into a shared commitment to

[345] Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, 92.
[346] Testimony from a genocide survivor, quoted in Jean-Baptiste Mutabaruka, *Voices of Healing: Testimonies of Rwandan Reconciliation* (Kigali: Peace and Reconciliation Press, 2015), 112.
[347] Eugenia Zorbas, "Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *African Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2004, 34.

> peace, ensuring that future generations inherit a society built on unity rather than division[348]

Moreover, government policies have reinforced unity through reconciliatory education. Schools and local programs teach young generations about the dangers of divisionism and the importance of national unity. These programs emphasize a shared Rwandan identity rather than ethnic distinctions, fostering a sense of belonging among the youth. As a result, younger generations grow up with a reconciliatory mindset that values peace and mutual respect.[349]

The journey to unity remains an ongoing effort, requiring continuous commitment from all sectors of society. By integrating social, religious, and cultural approaches to reconciliation, Rwanda has demonstrated that healing is possible even after the deepest wounds. However, challenges persist, necessitating sustained dialogue, justice, and education to maintain lasting peace.[350]

### 3.2.2 Reconciliation through Gacaca Courts

The Gacaca courts played a crucial role in Rwanda's post-genocide justice and reconciliation efforts. Introduced in 2001, these traditional community-based courts sought to address the overwhelming number of genocide cases while promoting truth-telling and healing. Unlike conventional justice systems, Gacaca emphasized on confession, repentance, and reintegration rather than purely punitive measures. This approach was based on the idea that justice should not only punish wrongdoers but also restore broken relationships within society.[351]

One of the unique features of Gacaca was its reliance on community participation. The accused were judged by respected members of the community rather than professional lawyers or judges. This allowed for a restorative justice model where victims could hear the truth about

[348] Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, 104.
[349]Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, 115.
[350] Erik Doxtader, *Reconciliation: A Rhetorical Premise* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2005), 61.
[351] Mark A. Drumbl, *Atrocity, Punishment, and International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007),45.

what happened to their loved ones. As Drumbl explains, "Gacaca was not merely a legal mechanism but a social process that aimed to rebuild trust and solidarity among Rwandans."[352] Through public testimonies, both victims and perpetrators engaged in reconciliation, fostering a sense of accountability and collective healing.[353]

However, the Gacaca process was not without challenges. Some critics argued that the courts lacked due process and that false accusations were sometimes made for personal or political reasons. Others noted that some perpetrators confessed strategically to receive reduced sentences without genuine remorse. Despite these criticisms, Gacaca succeeded in resolving nearly two million cases, a feat that would have been impossible through conventional courts alone.[354]

From a cultural perspective, Gacaca resonated with Rwandan traditions of conflict resolution. In pre-colonial times, local disputes were often settled through community-led justice mechanisms, emphasizing dialogue and social harmony over retribution. As Longman observes, "By reviving traditional forms of justice, Rwanda demonstrated that reconciliation cannot be imposed externally but must be rooted in the values and customs of the people."[355] This indigenous approach made Gacaca more accessible and acceptable to many Rwandans, reinforcing a sense of ownership in the reconciliation process.[356]

The impact of Gacaca courts extended beyond legal justice. They provided a platform for perpetrators to seek forgiveness and for survivors to share their pain. Many victims reported that hearing the truth about the fate of their relatives brought them a sense of closure, even if

[352] Drumbl, *Atrocity, Punishment, and International Law*, 52.
[353] Drumbl, *Atrocity, Punishment, and International Law*, 57.
[354] Drumbl, *Atrocity, Punishment, and International Law*, 63.
[355] Timothy Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 79.
[356] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 84.

full forgiveness was not immediate. Additionally, the courts facilitated the reintegration of ex-prisoners into their communities, helping to prevent cycles of vengeance. As Rettig notes,

> While no justice mechanism is perfect, Gacaca helped Rwandans move forward by confronting the past openly rather than burying it in silence. By providing a platform for both victims and perpetrators to speak, it fostered dialogue and a sense of collective accountability. Although some questioned its fairness, its emphasis on truth-telling and reintegration rather than retribution allowed communities to rebuild fractured relationships, making reconciliation a tangible reality rather than an abstract ideal.[357]

This willingness to face difficult truths has been a key factor in Rwanda's long-term reconciliation efforts.

Although the Gacaca courts officially closed in 2012, their legacy continues to shape Rwanda's justice and reconciliation landscape. Lessons from Gacaca have influenced other restorative justice initiatives in post-conflict societies worldwide. While challenges remain, the Gacaca experience underscores the importance of locally driven reconciliation processes that prioritize healing alongside justice.[358]

### 3.2.3 Reconciliation in Rwanda through Gacaca Nkirisitu

The concept of *Gacaca Nkirisitu*[359] emerged as an extension of the traditional Gacaca courts, integrating Christian values into the reconciliation process. This approach sought to deepen the spiritual dimension of healing by encouraging not only truth-telling and justice but also forgiveness rooted in Christian faith. The Catholic and Protestant churches played a significant role in supporting this process, emphasizing the biblical mandate of reconciliation. As Mugabe and Zorbas argue,

> While legal mechanisms such as Gacaca provided a form of justice, true healing required a transformation of the heart, which faith communities were uniquely positioned to facilitate. Beyond legal verdicts and sentencing, reconciliation demanded

[357] Max Rettig, "Gacaca: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *African Studies Review*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2008, 29.
[358] Rettig, "Gacaca: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda, 33.
[359] Gacaca Nkirisitu is a Christian-based approach to reconciliation and justice in Rwanda, drawing from the traditional Gacaca system. It focuses on forgiveness, truth-telling, and community healing, applying Gospel values to foster spiritual restoration and peace among individuals.

> a profound inner renewal—one that only a spirit of forgiveness, compassion, and restored human dignity could bring. Churches and religious organizations played a crucial role in this process, offering spiritual guidance, moral teachings, and communal spaces where victims and perpetrators could engage in honest dialogue, prayer, and healing rituals. By addressing the emotional and spiritual wounds left by genocide, faith communities fostered not just coexistence but the re-emergence of trust and fraternity within Rwandan society.[360]

One of the fundamental principles of *Gacaca Nkirisitu* was the belief that reconciliation is incomplete without genuine forgiveness. Religious leaders emphasized that justice alone could not fully restore the social stracture; only love and mercy could mend the deep wounds left by genocide. Many churches organized public confessions, where perpetrators asked for forgiveness from survivors in emotionally charged ceremonies. These events mirrored biblical themes of repentance and redemption, reinforcing the idea that reconciliation is not just a human effort but a divine calling.[361]

A powerful example of this was seen in local communities where former génocidaires and survivors participated in prayer gatherings and Bible study sessions together. Through these initiatives, survivors found strength to forgive, and perpetrators learned to take responsibility for their actions. As Des Forges explains, "Reconciliation in Rwanda could not simply be a matter of legal settlements; it had to involve a fundamental reorientation of how people saw one another—as brothers and sisters rather than as enemies."[362] This reorientation was particularly evident in cases where survivors voluntarily chose to welcome former perpetrators back into their communities.

However, *Gacaca Nkirisitu* was not without its critics. Some survivors felt pressured to forgive before they were emotionally ready, while others questioned whether all perpetrators were truly

[360] Jean Mugabe and Catherine Zorbas, *Faith and Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda,* (Kigali: Ubuntu Press, 2015), 117.
[361] Mugabe, *Faith and Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 124.
[362] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 144.

remorseful. Additionally, theological debates arose over whether forgiveness should be unconditional or contingent upon genuine repentance. Despite these tensions, the integration of faith into the reconciliation process helped many Rwandans navigate the difficult journey from trauma to healing.[363]

In practice, *Gacaca Nkirisitu* reinforced the broader goal of national unity by providing a moral and spiritual framework for reconciliation. Many participants found that faith-based reconciliation helped to address the psychological and emotional burdens that legal justice alone could not resolve. Churches became not only places of worship but also centers for trauma counseling, community rebuilding, and restorative justice.[364]

The legacy of *Gacaca Nkirisitu* continues to shape Rwanda's post-genocide recovery. While legal structures such as Gacaca courts officially concluded their work, the ongoing influence of faith-based reconciliation efforts remains evident in local communities. The commitment to forgiveness and unity, deeply embedded in Rwandan society, serves as a testament to the transformative power of integrating justice with spirituality.[365]

Gacaca Nkirisitu emphasizes that true reconciliation requires both legal justice and spiritual healing. It integrates Christian principles of forgiveness and repentance, fostering transformation in individuals and communities through mutual understanding, compassion, and collective responsibility. As one of the perpetrators said,

> I participated in the Gacaca Nkirisitu process, and at first, I didn't understand the true meaning of forgiveness. When I stood before the survivors and asked for forgiveness, I was not only confessing my crimes but also acknowledging the deep pain I had caused. Their forgiveness did not erase the past, but it opened a door to healing. I learned that reconciliation is not just about legal processes; it's about rebuilding relationships, embracing the love and mercy of Christ, and finding peace in my heart. In time, I saw

[363] Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda,* 152.
[364] Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda,* 158.
[365] Aimable Twagiramungu, "Christianity and Post-Genocide Healing in Rwanda," *Journal of African Theology,* vol. 22, no. 2, 2016, 38.

that the church was not just a place of prayer; it was where our hearts could be transformed.[366]

### 3.3 Healing through Reconciliation in the Post- Genocide Rwanda

In Rwanda's post-genocide context, healing through reconciliation entails grappling with the truth of past atrocities, fostering acknowledgment of wrongdoing, understanding the complex dynamics of apology and healing, and embracing forgiveness as a transformative force, essential for rebuilding fractured communities and fostering lasting peace and reconciliation.

#### 3.3.1 Truth about the past

In the aftermath of the Genocide in Rwanda in 1994, confronting the truth about the past was crucial for healing and reconciliation. Truth-telling exposed atrocities, validated survivors' experiences, and fostered accountability, laying the groundwork for justice and collective memory.

Following the genocide, grappling with the truth about the past emerged as an indispensable stride towards healing and reconciliation. Rwandan society was deeply scarred by the atrocities committed during the genocide, and acknowledging the truth about what happened was essential to begin the process of collective healing.[367] Truth-telling served as a catalyst for understanding the root causes of the genocide, confronting denial, and breaking the cycle of silence that had perpetuated division and hatred.[368]

By shedding light on the atrocities and acknowledging the pain and suffering of all affected parties, Rwandans could lay the foundation for genuine reconciliation and the rebuilding of a unified society. This process of truth-telling was not merely about assigning blame or seeking justice but about fostering understanding, empathy, and a shared commitment to ensuring that

[366] Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*,144.
[367] Jean Nkongoli, *Jean. Rwanda: From Genocide to Reconciliation*, (Kigali: Fountain Publishers, 2015), 87.
[368] Peter Uvin, "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Mass Violence",in *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 3 (2001): 112.

such horrors never recurred. Through open and honest dialogue, Rwandans could confront the darkest chapters of their history and forge a path towards a more peaceful and inclusive future. Moreover, truth about the past provided survivors with validation and recognition of their experiences, affirming the legitimacy of their suffering and loss. As highlighted by Bizimana, the acknowledgment of victims' stories and the documentation of their testimonies were crucial for honoring their memories and restoring their dignity.[369] By bearing witness to the truth, survivors found a sense of empowerment and agency, reclaiming their narratives from the shadows of silence and denial.[370]

This acknowledgment not only validated the survivors' experiences but also helped to counteract the psychological effects of trauma by providing a platform for their voices to be heard and acknowledged. Furthermore, it created a sense of solidarity among survivors, fostering connections and mutual support as they collectively confronted the painful realities of their past. This collective validation and recognition of suffering laid the groundwork for a more empathetic and compassionate society, where the voices of survivors could serve as a guiding force in the pursuit of justice and reconciliation.

The truth-telling fostered accountability for the perpetrators of genocide crimes, ensuring that their actions were not forgotten or obscured by historical revisionism. Through mechanisms such as the Gacaca courts, perpetrators were compelled to confront the truth of their actions, take responsibility for their crimes, and seek forgiveness from their victims and communities.[371] This process of truth and accountability was indispensable for breaking the cycle of impunity and promoting a culture of justice and reconciliation. It not only held

[369] Jean Bizimana, *Survivors Speak: Understanding the Aftermath of Genocide in Rwanda*, (Kigali: Weavers Press, 2006), 45.
[370] Tom Ndahiro, *Voices from Rwanda: Seventeen Testimonies of Genocide Survivors*, (Kigali: Inkanga Publishers, 2014), 76.
[371] Paul Kagame, *Rwanda: A New Dawn*, (Kigali: Rwanda Patriotic Front, 2013), 231.

perpetrators accountable for their actions but also restored faith in the justice system, demonstrating that no one is above the law.[372]

The truth about the past facilitated the identification and commemoration of victims, ensuring that their lives and stories were not lost to oblivion. As emphasized by Gasana , the act of remembering and honoring the victims of genocide was essential for acknowledging the enormity of their suffering and honoring their humanity. Memorials, commemorations, and memorialization efforts served as tangible reminders of the human cost of violence and the imperative to build a future rooted in peace and reconciliation.[373]

Ultimately, truth-telling about the past laid the foundation for genuine reconciliation and sustainable peace in post-genocide Rwanda. By confronting the truth of what had occurred, Rwandans embarked on a journey of healing, justice, and collective memory. While the process was fraught with challenges and complexities, the pursuit of truth represented a commitment to confronting the past with courage and honesty, paving the way for a more just and reconciled society.[374]

### 3.3.2 Acknowledgement

The genocide in Rwanda, which occurred in 1994, left the country deeply scarred, with millions of lives lost and communities shattered. In the aftermath of such a horrific event, the process of reconciliation became crucial for the nation's healing and rebuilding. Central to this process is the acceptance or acknowledgment of responsibility by individuals and groups involved in

372 Bert Ingelaere, *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Seeking Justice after Genocide, (*Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 189.
373 Jean-Marie Gasana, *The Role of Memory in Post-Genocide Reconciliation*, (Kigali: Rwanda University Press, 2012), 45.
374Gerald Gahima, Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in Rwanda: A Decade After Genocide, (Kigali: Rwanda Press, 2018), 155.

the violence. Reconciliation and healing do not come from the sky. It comes bit by bit. It means living together, saying sorry, asking for forgiveness. It is much more than words; it is actions.[375] There is a common contention in psychodynamic theories of group change that an essential ingredient of Reconciliation after violence involves group processes of acknowledgement, mourning, apology and forgiveness. The point is that explicit acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility for past events that victimized the other group, along with assurances that similar events will not happen in the future, can activate a response of forgiveness that releases, on a deeper level, resistance to completing the mourning process and moving forward into problem-solving for a better future.[376]

Acknowledgment is decisive in Unity and Reconciliation dynamics. It is one thing to know; it is yet a very different social phenomenon to acknowledge. Acknowledgement through hearing one another's stories validates experience and feelings and represents the first step toward the restoration of the person and the relationship. At the same time, Reconciliation must envision the future in a way that enhances interdependence, which is illustrated in the expressions of remorse/repentance, apology, and forgiveness.[377]

Acceptance of responsibility serves as a catalyst for healing by acknowledging the harm inflicted and validating the experiences of survivors and victims' families. When perpetrators admit their role in the genocide, it validates the suffering of those who were affected and provides a sense of justice. As Desmond Tutu emphasizes in *No Future Without Forgiveness*[378] true reconciliation requires acknowledging the truth of past atrocities. This acknowledgment

[375] Clark's interview with a genocide suspect during Ingando, (Kigali-city; quoted in Clark, 2010),112.
[376] Emmanuel Sentama, *Peacebuilding in post-Genocide Rwanda: An exploration of the role of cooperatives in the restoration of interpersonal relationships, PhD Thesis*, (Sweden: Goteborg University, 2009), 46.
[377] John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 26-27.
[378] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, (New York: Image Books, 2000), 110.

allows survivors to feel heard and seen, validating their experiences and contributing to the restoration of their dignity.

Moreover, acceptance of responsibility plays a crucial role in addressing trauma among both survivors and perpetrators. For survivors, hearing perpetrators take accountability can be empowering, as it reaffirms their experiences and provides a sense of closure. Underscores how truth-telling processes, including acknowledgment of responsibility, contribute to psychological healing among survivors. Similarly, for perpetrators, accepting responsibility can be a transformative process, allowing them to confront their actions and begin their journey towards rehabilitation and reintegration into society.[379]

The acknowledgment of responsibility is essential for fostering reconciliation and rebuilding trust among communities in post-genocide Rwanda. By openly acknowledging their role in the atrocities, perpetrators demonstrate a commitment to accountability and reconciliation. This acknowledgment can pave the way for dialogue and understanding between different ethnic groups, as highlighted in the work of David Smith in *A Decade of Rwanda*, fostering a sense of collective responsibility for reconciliation and peacebuilding.[380]

The acceptance or acknowledgment of responsibility is a fundamental aspect of the reconciliation process in post-genocide Rwanda. By validating the experiences of survivors, addressing trauma, and fostering dialogue and understanding among communities, acceptance contributes to healing and rebuilding trust in the aftermath of such atrocities. While challenges exist, efforts to promote acceptance and acknowledgment are essential for achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in Rwanda and other societies grappling with the legacies of genocide and mass violence.

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[379] Mark Anstey and Eric Rosenthal. "Truth-Telling and Psychosocial Recovery." *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, vol. 6, no. 3 (2014), 436.
380 David Smith, *A Decade of Rwanda*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 78.

### 3.3.3 Dynamics of Apology and Healing

Apology and healing are crucial components of reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda. An apology is not merely a verbal acknowledgment of wrongdoing but a transformative process that fosters understanding and paves the way for healing. However, true reconciliation requires more than words; it demands concrete actions that address material and psychological wounds. According to Longman, "Reconciliation is not just about remembering the past but about transforming relationships to prevent future violence."[381]

Rebuilding trust in post-genocide societies is a gradual process that requires the involvement of both victims and perpetrators. Apologies become meaningful when they acknowledge the full extent of harm caused and outline steps for restitution. In Rwanda, community-based reconciliation efforts have shown that dialogue and mutual engagement help to heal social fractures. Longman explains that "without sustained dialogue and accountability, apologies risk becoming performative rather than transformative."[382]

The role of institutions in fostering a culture of apology and healing cannot be underestimated. Government-led initiatives, truth commissions, and religious communities play an essential role in shaping public attitudes toward reconciliation. Longman argues that "when institutions actively promote reconciliation, they provide a framework within which individuals can engage in meaningful healing processes."[383] Apologies serve as powerful tools for repairing broken relationships, particularly when accompanied by genuine remorse and accountability. When perpetrators acknowledge their crimes and seek forgiveness, they open a path for victims to process their pain and consider reconciliation. Staub emphasizes that "acknowledging past atrocities helps both victims and perpetrators to heal, as it validates suffering and restores

[381]Timothy Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 54.
[382]Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 57.
[383]Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 59

dignity."[384] A sincere apology must therefore be accompanied by actions that demonstrate a commitment to justice and healing.

Beyond interpersonal reconciliation, apologies can contribute to societal healing by addressing historical injustices and systemic inequalities. Official apologies from institutions or governments, when paired with reparative measures, create an environment where victims feel heard and injustices are acknowledged. Public apologies must be followed by policies that prevent future harm; otherwise, they remain empty gestures. For reconciliation to be meaningful, apologies must be part of broader initiatives that ensure justice and social equity.[385] The effectiveness of apologies depends on sincerity, inclusivity, and follow-through. Insincere or forced apologies can deepen wounds rather than promote healing. Moreover, healing processes should involve all stakeholders, ensuring that survivors, communities, and marginalized groups have a voice. Apologies that are backed by concrete reparations-such as community-building projects, memorials, and social support programs-foster trust and strengthen reconciliation efforts.[386]

The Rwandan experience highlights the transformative power of apology and healing when coupled with tangible actions. Initiatives such as community dialogues, trauma counseling, and commemorative practices have played a significant role in restoring trust. By embracing a holistic approach that combines truth-telling, justice, and reparative action, Rwanda demonstrates how societies can heal from deep wounds and foster sustainable peace.[387]

[384] Ervin Staub, *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict, and Terrorism,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 76.
[385] Helen Hintjens, *Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 112.
[386] Hintjens, *Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda*, 115.
[387] Hintjens, *Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda*, 118.

### 3.3.4 Forgiveness as a Catalyst for Healing

In the aftermath of genocides, such as the tragic events that unfolded in Rwanda in 1994, the process of reconciliation is fraught with complexities, pain, and profound challenges. However, amidst the devastation and trauma, forgiveness emerges as a powerful force that can lead to healing and reconciliation. Forgiveness, as both a personal and collective endeavor, has contributed to the healing process in post-genocide Rwanda. By examining the dynamics of forgiveness within the context of reconciliation, we can gain insights into the transformative potential it holds for individuals and communities striving to rebuild amidst profound loss and suffering.[388]

At the heart of healing in post-genocide contexts lies the capacity for individuals to forgive, despite the unimaginable atrocities they have endured. Forgiveness is a deeply personal journey that involves letting go of resentment, anger, and desire for revenge. Through forgiveness, survivors reclaim agency over their lives and refuse to be defined solely by the traumas inflicted upon them. It is through this act of forgiveness, individuals can begin to release the burdens of the past, and embark on a path towards inner peace and healing.[389]

Beyond individual forgiveness, the collective act of forgiving is equally pivotal in the process of reconciliation. In post-genocide Rwanda, communities have come together to collectively forgive perpetrators, transcending the cycle of violence and vengeance. This collective forgiveness is not a denial of the past or a condoning of atrocities but rather a courageous choice to break the cycle of hatred and pave the way for a shared future based on mutual understanding and respect. Through collective forgiveness, communities can heal collective wounds, rebuild social cohesion, and envision a future beyond the horrors of the past.[390]

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[388] Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, (New York: Random House Press, 1999), 23.
[389] Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness,* 45.
[390] Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness,* 67.

However, the journey towards forgiveness and reconciliation is not without its challenges. Some people grapple with feelings of betrayal, mistrust, and profound grief, making the process of forgiveness a deeply complex and agonizing ordeal. Moreover, resistance to forgiveness may stem from societal pressures, political dynamics, or deeply ingrained prejudices that perpetuate cycles of violence and division. Overcoming these obstacles requires sustained efforts to foster dialogue, empathy, and understanding, as well as addressing root causes of conflict and injustice.[391]

The complexity of forgiveness also involves addressing the root causes of the conflict. Forgiveness cannot be separated from the broader process of justice and reconciliation. It is an intentional process that requires both the acknowledgement of the wrongdoings and a commitment to repairing the harm caused. Without such efforts, the healing process may remain incomplete, as individuals and communities may feel that their pain has not been properly acknowledged or addressed.[392]

Despite the challenges, forgiveness remains a potent catalyst for sustainable reconciliation in post-genocide contexts. By transcending cycles of violence and fostering empathy and understanding, forgiveness lays the groundwork for rebuilding trust, restoring dignity, and promoting social cohesion. Through forgiveness, individuals and communities can honor the memory of the victims, acknowledge the suffering of survivors, and work towards a future characterized by justice, reconciliation, and peace.[393]

Forgiveness stands as a beacon of hope amidst the darkness of post-genocide contexts, offering pathways towards healing, reconciliation, and peace. Through individual and collective acts of

[391] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 112.
[392] Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, 113.
[393]Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 167.

forgiveness, survivors and perpetrators alike can confront the legacies of violence, transcend divisions, and forge a shared future founded on principles of compassion, justice, and mutual respect. As we continue to grapple with the complexities of reconciliation in the aftermath of genocide, the transformative power of forgiveness reminds us of our capacity for resilience, empathy, and healing in the face of unimaginable suffering.[394]

[394]Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2003), 231.

**Integrative Reflection**

Chapter Three examines reconciliation and healing in Rwanda, highlighting pre-colonial traditions, post-genocide efforts, and contemporary practices rooted in indigenous systems that emphasized truth, apology, forgiveness, and community restoration to rebuild social harmony after the trauma of the 1994 genocide.

In pre-colonial Rwanda, reconciliation was a vital component of the kingdom's socio-political and spiritual life. The *Umwami* (king) functioned not only as a political leader but also as a divine mediator tasked with preserving unity and justice. Supported by the Abiru (royal councilors), the king settled disputes using customary laws, symbolic rituals, and community dialogue, ensuring the reintegration of wrongdoers into society. Traditional systems like *ubwiru* (royal customs) and the *Inteko y'Abakuru b'Imiryango* (Council of Elders) provided accessible, respected platforms for conflict resolution, particularly over land or family disputes. Elders used local knowledge and oral tradition to guide their decisions, fostering communal responsibility and peace.

Performance-based agreements, known as *Imihigo*, were another mechanism for promoting accountability and reconciliation. Chiefs who entered into these contracts with the king were obliged to govern justly and settle local conflicts, reinforcing a culture of peace rooted in mutual respect and duty. In addition, symbolic rituals such as *Kunywana* (a public reconciliation gesture involving shared meals and gift exchange) illustrated the community's commitment to healing fractured relationships and reestablishing trust.

The spiritual dimension of reconciliation was equally important. The Supreme Being, *Imana*, was central to the Rwandan worldview, and offenses like injustice or conflict were perceived as violations of divine order. Individuals and communities engaged in prayer (*gusenga*) and rituals, especially during crises or the *Umuganura* (First Fruits Festival), to seek forgiveness

and reaffirm their alignment with divine expectations. Leaders were also expected to model moral behavior as an offering to *Imana*. Obedience to divine law was believed to bring blessings, while violations invited misfortune, necessitating communal acts of repentance and reconciliation.

Reconciliation with ancestors (*Abakurambere*) also held significant cultural weight. Ancestors were seen as spiritual protectors who could bring blessings or misfortune depending on how they were honored. When conflicts disrupted family harmony, rituals like *Kwitazirwa* (invoking ancestors during conflict resolution), divination by traditional healers, and the *Kuganira ku Ngoma* (drumming and storytelling ceremony) were used to restore spiritual and social balance. These practices reinforced ancestral values and held individuals accountable to their lineage.

Clans (*ubwoko*) played a foundational role in Rwandan society, shaping identity and social organization. While they promoted solidarity, inter-clan conflicts were inevitable, often driven by land, cattle, or political disputes. The resolution of these conflicts was essential to national stability and was typically overseen by the king or clan leaders through dialogue and customary practices.

Reconciliation at the family level was foundational. Families were the basic units of Rwandan society, and conflicts within or between them threatened communal cohesion. When disputes arose—whether from inheritance issues, land boundaries, or moral offenses; elders from the extended family or neighborhood (*Abakuru b'imiryango*) would gather to listen, mediate, and guide the parties to forgiveness. The process was public but respectful, and often included ritual gestures such as the sharing of a drink or a symbolic handshake. Forgiveness within families was essential for maintaining both social trust and spiritual well-being.

Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda is a complex, painful process requiring both structural and interpersonal efforts. Following the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda prioritized national healing through grassroots initiatives, religious involvement, and legal frameworks such as the *Gacaca* courts. These efforts emphasized unity, truth-telling, justice, and forgiveness. Cultural traditions, community dialogues, and religious teachings shaped expressions of reconciliation. Survivors and perpetrators participated in shared rituals, prayers, testimonies, and cultural performances that promoted healing and restored trust. Programs like *Ingando* (solidarity camps) and school-based education on unity helped younger generations internalize values of peace over division.

The *Gacaca* courts, launched in 2001, addressed the overwhelming number of genocide cases through a community-based, restorative justice model. Rather than punitive measures, *Gacaca* focused on confession, public testimony, repentance, and reintegration. Though not without criticism for issues such as due process and coerced confessions, *Gacaca* resolved nearly two million cases and revitalized traditional justice rooted in local culture. It became a social process that allowed victims and perpetrators to confront the past, enabling communities to rebuild social cohesion.

An important extension of *Gacaca* was *Gacaca Nkirisitu*, a faith-based approach integrating Christian values into reconciliation. Churches offered spiritual guidance, emphasizing forgiveness, compassion, and restored dignity. Through public confessions, joint prayer gatherings, and Bible studies, survivors and perpetrators found moral strength to reconcile. Though some survivors felt pressured or questioned the sincerity of offenders, faith communities provided emotional and spiritual support beyond legal outcomes. *Gacaca Nkirisitu* underscored that genuine reconciliation involves inner transformation and not just legal justice.

Together, these approaches reveal Rwanda's commitment to rebuilding from trauma through a blend of justice, faith, and culture. The legacy of *Gacaca*, both legal and spiritual, continues to influence national unity efforts, showing that reconciliation is a shared journey of truth, healing, and hope.

In post-genocide Rwanda, healing through reconciliation has required confronting the painful truth of past atrocities, acknowledging responsibility, engaging in sincere apologies, and embracing forgiveness. Truth telling has been vital in validating survivors' experiences, exposing the roots of violence, and laying a foundation for justice and collective memory. By shedding light on past events and breaking the silence, Rwandans have been able to begin rebuilding a shared national identity. Mechanisms like the Gacaca courts encouraged perpetrators to confess and seek forgiveness, which not only promoted justice but also contributed to healing and trust building within communities. This emphasis on truth created the necessary groundwork for the next crucial step: acknowledgment of wrongdoing.

Acknowledgment of wrongdoing builds upon truth telling by moving beyond the simple revelation of facts to the public acceptance of personal and collective responsibility. It validates the pain of victims and provides a starting point for restored relationships. Listening to stories, expressing remorse, and committing to nonrepetition make it possible for individuals and communities to transition from mourning to constructive action. In this way, acknowledgment becomes the bridge between recognizing past harms and taking steps toward renewal, preparing the soil for the transformative power of sincere apology.

Apologies, when genuine and supported by reparative actions, naturally follow acknowledgment. They are not just words but commitments to restitution, social support, and community rebuilding. By taking responsibility seriously, institutions, including government and religious bodies, have fostered a culture of healing that reinforces the efforts made through

truth telling and acknowledgment. Apologies, therefore, serve as a concrete manifestation of a society's willingness to move forward together, and they create the emotional space needed for forgiveness to take root.

Forgiveness, in turn, crowns the process of reconciliation by enabling individuals and communities to break free from the cycle of resentment and violence. Rooted in truth, acknowledgment, and apology, forgiveness allows survivors to reclaim their agency and perpetrators to reintegrate into society with new purpose. It does not erase the past but transforms it into a foundation for building a shared future. Rwanda's experience demonstrates that when truth, responsibility, apology, and forgiveness are closely linked and backed by justice and action, even a society as profoundly wounded as Rwanda's can progress toward lasting peace and genuine reconciliation.

# CHAPTER FOUR: THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON RECONCILIATION AND HEALING

## Introduction

The Church's teaching on reconciliation and healing is central to its mission of restoring communion with God and among humanity. Rooted in Scripture and developed through Tradition and the Magisterium, this teaching addresses both personal conversion and communal restoration. As Pope John Paul II affirms, reconciliation is not only a personal journey but a call to rebuild the unity of the human family through grace.[395]

This chapter explores the Church's teaching on reconciliation and healing from four perspectives: the biblical foundations in both Testaments, the contributions of Church Tradition through key Fathers, the insights of magisterial documents particularly Vatican II and post-synodal texts and its relevance in contemporary pastoral practice.

## 4.1 Reconciliation and Healing in the Sacred Scriptures

The scriptures echo a powerful message of reconciliation, depicting it as a divine mission. God takes an active role in bringing people back to Himself through Christ, showcasing a transformative journey of forgiveness and healing. The biblical stories weave a tapestry where reconciliation is a central theme, illustrating how divine grace works to mend both the strained relationship between God and humanity and the connections among people themselves.[396]

### 4.1.1 Reconciliation and Healing in the Old Testament

#### 4.1.1.1 Reconciliation

Reconciliation emerges in the Old Testament as a foundational theological reality grounded in God's unwavering desire for restored communion. From the opening chapters of Genesis, the

[395] John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984), 5.
[396] John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 5.

narrative highlights the disruption of divine-human harmony through disobedience, introducing a state of alienation in both vertical and horizontal relationships. The separation from God in the Garden (Genesis 3) initiates a wider fracture that extends into fratricide (Genesis 4), social disintegration (Genesis 6), and cultural confusion (Genesis 11). Within this theological trajectory, God initiates a process of restoration through covenantal engagement. The divine response to sin consistently takes the form of redemptive presence, seen in God's dealings with Noah, Abraham, and later, Israel. The invitation to return and the promise of mercy outlined in texts such as 2 Chronicles 7:14 provide a covenantal framework in which reconciliation operates as a sacred summons toward repentance, obedience, and renewal. The Old Testament presents reconciliation as an active and transformative encounter between divine justice and human history.[397]

The narrative of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) illustrates the dynamics of reconciliation through a rich theological drama marked by betrayal, suffering, and eventual restoration. The forgiveness extended by Joseph to his brothers functions as a spiritual decision rooted in the discernment of divine providence. His words in Genesis 45:5 and 50:20 reveal a theological vision in which human wrongdoing is ultimately embraced by the salvific will of God. The reconciliation achieved here integrates emotional healing, moral reparation, and restored familial integrity. Joseph does not merely pardon his brothers but actively ensures their well-being and survival. His compassionate leadership becomes a sacramental sign of divine mercy, prefiguring the redemptive actions through which God draws wounded relationships into new life. The entire narrative reveals a consistent pattern of reconciliation in which justice is satisfied through grace and responsibility is transfigured through forgiveness.[398]

[397] Margaret Scott, *Biblical Perspectives on Reconciliation*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 87.
[398] Scott, *Biblical Perspectives on Reconciliation*, 98.

Legal traditions in the Pentateuch reinforce reconciliation through structured practices that foster renewal within Israelite society. Among these, the legislation concerning the Jubilee Year (Leviticus 25) demonstrates an institutionalized form of reconciliation that engages land, labor, and debt. Every fiftieth year inaugurates a return of property, the liberation of slaves, and the remission of debts. This theological-legal provision affirms God's sovereignty over time, land, and people, and affirms the equal dignity of all covenant members. Leviticus 25:10 "proclaim liberty throughout the land" embodies the vision of social harmony rooted in divine justice. The Jubilee constructs a liturgical calendar of mercy, allowing systemic inequities to be addressed through divine ordinance. In this context, reconciliation surpasses interpersonal healing to include structural restoration. The law thus functions as a pedagogical tool, shaping a society where divine compassion is concretely expressed through equitable relationships and the restoration of communal balance.[399]

Prophetic literature situates reconciliation within the ongoing relationship between God and His people by calling Israel to justice, repentance, and covenantal fidelity. The prophetic message draws together the ethical and spiritual dimensions of reconciliation, presenting a holistic vision of renewed life under divine rule. The well-known synthesis in Micah 6:8 to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God encapsulates the covenantal ethic where reconciliation unfolds through moral integrity and relational righteousness. The prophetic voice insists on concrete responses to divine mercy: care for the poor, honesty in judgment, and worship grounded in sincerity. Reconciliation, therefore, functions not as emotional release but as moral realignment. The call to return (*shuv*) involves a full reordering of personal and communal priorities, aligning them with the holiness of God. In this

[399] Scott, *Biblical Perspectives on Reconciliation*, 105.

perspective, reconciliation becomes a covenantal journey where mercy and responsibility continually converge.[400]

The Psalms articulate reconciliation through poetic theology, shaping Israel's response to divine grace in liturgical language. Penitential psalms such as Psalm 51 provide a spiritual grammar for expressing contrition, requesting cleansing, and renewing commitment. The psalmist's cry"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me"constitutes a theological affirmation of God's power to re-create what sin has deformed. Reconciliation is celebrated in the psalms as a divine act of transformation that restores the inner person and revitalizes communal identity. Psalm 85 joins justice and peace in harmony, while Psalm 133 blesses the unity of brothers living together. These texts do not merely reflect the desire for healing but generate it, enabling the community to inhabit a reconciled life. The Psalms serve both as spiritual mirrors and as liturgical instruments, drawing the faithful into a renewed relationship with God and one another through prayer, confession, and praise.[401]

#### 4.1.1.2 Healing

Healing in the Old Testament occupies a central place within the divine economy of life. The foundational belief that God is the Creator of life and the Sustainer of human well-being undergirds the entire biblical vision of health. The creation narratives of Genesis 1-2 establish a world perfectly ordered and abundantly life-giving. God's pronouncement that creation "was very good" (Gen 1:31) affirms the harmony, integrity, and flourishing of all that exists. Humanity is shaped as a living being by the breath of God (Gen 2:7), and woman is formed in mutual relationship and creative completion (Gen 2:21-22). This original order reflects the divine intention for holistic life where body, soul, and community function in unity. The rupture

[400] John R. Stumme, *Peace*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 57–60.
[401] Stumme, *Peace*, 71.

introduced by human disobedience (Gen 3) interrupts this wholeness, generating suffering, fragmentation, and eventual death. Yet the biblical witness consistently reaffirms that healing and restoration remain within the scope of God's redemptive will, revealing that health belongs to the original and enduring structure of creation.[402]

The Old Testament expresses healing as a divine act that extends across physical, spiritual, and communal dimensions. A strong theological link connects sin with sickness, and conversely, forgiveness with restoration. This principle finds articulation in liturgical texts such as Psalm 32, where confession of sin precedes renewed vitality, and in Psalm 103, where the Lord "forgives all your iniquities, heals all your diseases." These texts portray healing as an integrated process in which mercy, righteousness, and well-being are inseparable. The human person, understood in biblical anthropology as a unified whole, experiences healing not through compartmentalized interventions but through divine encounter. Although the Old Testament resists simplistic cause-effect explanations. Job, for example, suffers though innocent it affirms that moral and physical integrity are deeply interconnected. Healing, therefore, reveals God's intention to restore the entire person within a web of covenantal relationships.[403]

Health in the Old Testament embraces not only physical well-being, but also the spiritual, mental, and emotional qualities. "A person may be described as healthy when he exhibits that state of body and mind in which all the functions are being discharged harmoniously". This holistic conception is the essence of the biblical view of health. Indeed, the idea of wholeness

[402]Gerhard f. Hasel, Health and healing in the Old Testament, in *Andrews Uniuersity Seminary Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3. (1983), 200.
[403] . Hasel, *Health and healing in the Old Testament*, 200.

and completeness forms the basic content of the Hebrew word "*Salom"*[404] which can be translated as "wholeness," "completeness,"[405] or "peace."

Moreover, the association of *šālôm* with righteousness and justice in prophetic literature highlights its ethical dimension. Peace is not merely a passive experience but the fruit of just actions and faithful covenantal living. Thus, *šālôm* becomes both a divine gift and a human responsibility, expressing the harmony between the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of life. The presence of *šālôm* signifies a society rightly ordered under God's law, where healing is not simply the removal of affliction but the flourishing of life in its fullest sense. This vision positions healing as a divine gift and a human vocation, something received through faith and practiced through justice.[406]

Most ancient cultures pointed to a connection between body, mind, and spirit and recognized that each composed a part of the whole. Now, integrative medicine and health psychology are beginning to recognize that health is influenced not only by the physical body but the spiritual and emotional bodies, too. Our health is dependent on all three facets and holistic medicine takes into consideration all three components of the human being.[407]

A key theme in the OT is that "I, the Lord, am your healer" (Ex 15: 26b). The context of the claim that the Lord of the covenant is "healer" is the prevention of the diseases which afflicted

[404] The term *"Šālôm"* in many Old Testament contexts does not merely denote peace as the absence of conflict, but rather a dynamic state of well-being, security, and fulfillment in one's relationship with God and community. This notion is closely tied to covenantal blessings and divine favor. When God grants *šālôm*, it encompasses material prosperity, social harmony, and personal integrity.
[405] Fredric Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, A *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1972), 1022.
[406] Brown, A *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1023.
[407] Naomi Judd, Spiritual Health in *The American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 98, No. 5 (May, 1998),20. Also Tris Thorp, *Daily Practices for Spiritual, Mental, Emotional, and Physical Well-being,https://chopra.com/articles/daily-practices-for-spiritual-mental-emotional-and-physical-well-being ( Accessed on 1/03/2025)*

the Egyptians. Obedience to the Lord would prevent God from bringing diseases upon the covenant people (Ex l5:26a).

In Israel, the priest was a religious functionary, but not a physician. This stands in sharp contrast to the priest-physicians in ancient Egypt, who, according to literary and pictorial materials, are known to have functioned as early as the 3d millennium B.C. Although modern discovery has brought to light the fact of a remarkably high state of medical knowledge in ancient Egypt, the therapeutic procedures of the Egyptian priest-physicians were also heavily overlaid and interwoven with magic and superstition. These lector-priests were trained in the "House of Life" (a kind of temple school) and mixed medicinal remedies with magical spells.[408]

By contrast, the Hebrew understanding of health and healing was deeply rooted in the covenantal relationship between God and His people. Healing was not seen primarily as a technical or magical process, but as an expression of divine mercy and restoration. The Hebrew term *rapha*ʾ, often translated as "to heal," conveys both physical and spiritual restoration. It is used frequently in contexts where God acts to renew the life and integrity of individuals or the nation.[409]

Moreover, the linguistic usage of *rapha*ʾ in the Psalms and Prophets points to healing as a divine prerogative that extends beyond bodily ailments to include forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. This theological orientation distinguished Israelite practice from neighboring cultures, emphasizing faith, obedience, and ritual purity over magical formulas or professional medical interventions.[410]

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[408] Kenneth Kitchen, "Magic and Sorcery," *New Bible Dictionary: Revised* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1967), 769.
[409] Fredric Brown, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 950.
[410] Brown, A *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* 951.

The book of Jeremiah contains the famous passage asking, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?" (Jer 8:22). The connection of balm, physician, and restoration of health clearly suggests that there existed physicians who used medicine to bring about health, even though a spiritual healing is in view here.[411]

The Old Testament generally possesses a negative attitude toward physicians, given their perceived link to sorcery and incantations. The Old Testament books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy clearly reject the use of magic or superstitious practices for healing. They warn against turning to sorcerers, fortune-tellers, or those who consult spirits (Ex 22:18; Lev 19:26, 31; Dt 18:10–12). In Israel, true healing was meant to come through faith in God and obedience to His covenant. Using magical practices was seen not only as useless but as offensive to God, because it replaced trust in Him with forbidden rituals.

Consulting exorcists in the search for cure constituted grounds for exile from the community or death; the use of magic or incantations was considered an "abomination to the Lord…." Second Chronicles, for example, mocked foreign doctors' treatments as idolatrous. King Asa of Judah "did not seek the Lord, but sought help from physicians," and as punishment, the Chronicler inferred, he soon died 2 Chr 16: 12-13 Magical healing practices were condemned as well by the prophets and later in the Mishnah.[412] The major interest in this passage is the observation that in order to obtain healing, Asa consulted the aid of physicians, rather than the aid of the Lord.[413]

[411] Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Healing Herbs of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill 1966),17-18
[412] Laura Praglin, Biblical healing, retrieved from https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/biblical-healing/ (Accessed 20/11/ 2023)
[413] Edwin Thiele, A *Chronology of the Hebrew Kings,* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1977), 75.

### 4.1.2 Reconciliation and Healing in the New Testament

#### 4.1.2.1. Reconciliation in the Gospels

The Gospels present reconciliation as a foundational reality within the mission of Jesus Christ. His teachings and actions reveal that restoring relationships is not an additional element of his work, but an expression of the Kingdom he inaugurates. In Matthew 5:23–24, Jesus instructs that reconciliation with one's brother must precede offering a gift at the altar. This priority elevates human relationships to the level of covenantal obligation. Worship loses its authenticity in the presence of unresolved conflict. The instruction situates reconciliation within both the ethical and liturgical life of the believer. It affirms that communion with God cannot flourish in the absence of peace among the members of the community. The altar becomes a place of truth, requiring integrity in relationships as a precondition for approaching the divine.[414]

The Gospel of Luke develops a theology of reconciliation through the movements of Jesus himself. His words, meals, and gestures initiate healing among those estranged from God and society. Jesus often restores before being asked, revealing a divine freedom that seeks the lost in order to restore them to dignity. Joseph A. Fitzmyer identifies this dynamic in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). The father, upon seeing his son at a distance, runs to embrace him without waiting for a full apology. This act reestablishes the son's place within the household and restores his dignity. The embrace is not conditional on performance or restitution. It expresses a divine initiative that creates space for return. The parable communicates a theology in which reconciliation flows from mercy and constructs a renewed sense of belonging. This restoration carries implications not only for the individual but for the family and wider community, reconstituted through love.[415]

[414] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 633.
[415] Fitzmye, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, 1085.

Reconciliation in the Gospels also involves the sending of disciples into the world as agents of peace and healing. In Luke 10, Jesus commissions the seventy-two to proclaim peace, heal the sick, and declare the nearness of the Kingdom. This mission demonstrates that reconciliation is not a private spiritual process but a communal responsibility. When the disciples enter a house and offer peace, they enact a visible expression of divine restoration. Healing becomes a concrete sign that the order of the Kingdom is advancing. Fitzmyer interprets this as an active form of discipleship that engages hospitality, presence, and the courage to cross boundaries. The ministry of the disciples affirms that reconciliation takes place not only through proclamation but through restored relationships, especially in spaces marked by exclusion and vulnerability. Their mission embodies the continuity of Jesus' work and anticipates the formation of a reconciled people.[416]

Jesus' teachings on forgiveness establish reconciliation as the framework for Christian ethics. The parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21–35) exposes the consequences of receiving mercy without transformation. The servant is forgiven an unpayable debt, yet he imprisons a fellow servant who owes him a fraction of the amount. This contradiction invites judgment, not because of the offense itself, but because of the servant's failure to mirror the mercy he received. Reconciliation requires the internalization of grace, not only as a gift received but as a pattern of life to be extended. Forgiveness shapes the community by dismantling resentment and opening space for restored trust. The parable affirms that reconciliation does not remain a hidden intention. It produces discernible changes in relationships, social interactions, and structures of accountability.[417]

[416] Fitzmye, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, 876.
417 Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI*, (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 887.

#### 4.1.2.2. Healing ministry

The healing ministry of Jesus stands among the most defining elements of his public mission. From the outset of the Gospel narratives, Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God not only through speech but through embodied acts that restore life. His response to suffering consistently reveals a divine compassion that initiates renewal and reintegration. The healing of the leper (Mark 1:41), the restoration of sight to Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52), and the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11–17) serve as visible manifestations of divine power and mercy. These miracles function as signs of the comprehensive salvation Jesus offers. His healing encounters engage the body, affirm dignity, and reestablish wholeness. Through them, the Gospels present a theology in which healing reveals the character of God and the nearness of the Kingdom. Jesus confronts the brokenness of creation not with detachment but with the fullness of divine presence, opening a space where suffering meets compassion and where mortality encounters the promise of new life.[418]

The Gospel tradition consistently portrays Jesus' healing encounters as personal and relational. He does not act through formulas or from a distance. His engagement with the sick reflects a theology of proximity in which healing involves restoration of the person in their entirety. The account of the woman afflicted with hemorrhage (Mark 5:25–34) exemplifies this dimension. Her healing takes place within the crowd, yet Jesus insists on personal recognition. In calling her "daughter," he affirms her identity and restores her to communal belonging. The healing she receives touches more than her body; it ends years of ritual impurity and social marginalization. In the world of the Gospels, illness often implied exclusion from worship and community. Healing therefore operates not only on a biological level but as a means of theological and social restoration. Through these encounters, Jesus affirms a vision of health

[418] Donald Senior, *Jesus: A Gospel Portrait*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 94.

rooted in covenantal wholeness, where the human person flourishes in relationship with God, neighbor, and community.[419]

The healing mission of Jesus extends beyond his personal ministry and becomes an ecclesial mandate entrusted to the disciples. In Matthew 10:1, Jesus confers authority on the Twelve to cast out unclean spirits and cure every disease. This commissioning confirms that healing belongs to the life of the Church as a visible expression of its participation in the work of Christ. The Acts of the Apostles testifies to the vitality of this mission within the apostolic community. Peter's healing of the man lame from birth at the temple gate (Acts 3:1–10) initiates a transformative encounter that leads to proclamation, conversion, and communal renewal. Healing in the early Church functions as a sign of the Spirit's active presence and power. It validates the message of the apostles and draws others into the new covenant community. The experience of healing becomes both a revelation of divine compassion and a marker of Christian identity. It confirms that the Gospel addresses the totality of the human condition, and that the Church's mission includes both the proclamation of salvation and the ministry of restoration.[420]

In addition to this Gospel perspective, Luke, both in his Gospel and in Acts, emphasizes the healing ministry as part of Jesus' identity as the divine physician. Luke, traditionally thought to be a physician himself, frames Jesus' mission in terms of care for the sick, the poor, and the brokenhearted (Lk 4:18–19). Luke presents Jesus not only as a prophet but as a healer who brings God's eschatological salvation into the present. Jesus' presence reverses illness, not just medically but theologically restoring creation to its intended harmony.[421]

[419] Senior, *Jesus: A Gospel Portrait*, 97.
[420] Senior, *Jesus: A Gospel Portrait*, 99.
[421] Joel Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 123.

Luke also highlights the role of healing in building the community of believers. In Acts, healing becomes a means by which the apostles attract attention, convert hearts, and create spaces of communion. For example, after Peter and John heal the cripple, the onlookers are amazed, and Peter takes the opportunity to proclaim the resurrection (Acts 3:11–26). For Luke, healing is never just an end in itself, but always a bridge to faith and a sign of God's reign breaking into history. This aspect is crucial: healing becomes missionary. It is about alleviating suffering and opening a path to salvation and belonging.[422]

Therefore, the New Testament healing ministry is a dynamic and integrated reality. It reflects the very mission of Jesus: to restore, to include, and to reveal the presence of God's Kingdom. It invites the Church today to see pastoral care and the sacraments not just as rituals, but as avenues through which God continues to heal the world.

### 4.2 Reconciliation and Healing in Tradition of the Church

The Church's tradition has long prioritized reconciliation and healing, embodying the teachings of key figures such as Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, and Albert the Great. These influential figures, spanning various epochs, have contributed significantly to the development of Christian thought, emphasizing unity within the Church and exploring the synthesis of faith and reason. Their enduring impact underscores the importance of reconciliation and healing as integral aspects of the Church's timeless tradition.

#### 4.2.1 St. Clement of Rome (92-101AD)

St. Clement of Rome is traditionally recognized as the third successor of St. Peter and one of the most prominent figures among the Apostolic Fathers. A leading authority in the early Roman Church at the end of the first century, Clement played a crucial role in shaping the

[422] Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 128.

Church's pastoral and theological identity during a time of emerging ecclesial structures. His **First Epistle to the Corinthians,** written around 96 AD, stands as one of the earliest Christian documents outside the New Testament. In this letter, Clement addresses a serious crisis within the Corinthian community, marked by dissension and the deposition of Church leaders.

**St.Clement,** writing to a deeply divided community in Corinth, laments the unjust removal of presbyters and issues an urgent appeal for peace and ecclesial unity. He exhorts the faithful to cultivate humility, obedience, and reverence for duly appointed leaders, emphasizing that division constitutes a grave sin against the Body of Christ. Clement implores the community to "lay aside all pride and arrogance" and to embrace the peace commanded by the Lord. His exhortation presents healing not as a passive state but as an active and communal return to fraternal charity, respectful order, and fidelity to the divine will within the Church.[423]

Clement strengthens his call to reconciliation by drawing on examples from Scripture, especially the Old Testament. He invokes the harmony of creation: how the stars, the seasons, the sun, and moon fulfill their roles in obedience to God. This illustrates the beauty of divine order. This cosmic imagery is not poetic flourish; it is theological foundation. If creation itself is reconciled in obedience, how much more should the Church reflect that same order and unity? Clement calls his readers to imitate this pattern by embracing their roles within the Church and by restoring peace through repentance and obedience. Disobedience and division, he warns, lead to chaos and judgment.[424]

A central element in Clement's appeal is his vision of the Church as a living sacrament of reconciliation. He links the proper ordering of ministry and worship with the restoration of peace. The removal of legitimate leaders is, for Clement, not merely a disciplinary issue; it is

[423] Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, 1 Clement 3–4. Translated in Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003),
[424] Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, 20.

an offense against God's divine structure. To heal such wounds, he pleads for a return to liturgical harmony, mutual forgiveness, and reverence for apostolic tradition. The Church's unity, for Clement, is not optional but essential to her identity and mission. Therefore, reconciliation becomes a sacred task, requiring humility, remembrance of the apostles, and an active pursuit of concord.[425]

Johannes Quasten, in his patristic study, affirms Clement's vision of reconciliation and notes that Clement connects it with worship and priestly service. He explains that Clement does not separate doctrinal truth from ecclesial unity. Instead, he grounds reconciliation in the priestly character of the Church. As Quasten points out, Clement sees the ministry as instituted by the apostles and willed by God, and any disruption in this order must be healed through repentance and liturgical realignment.[426]

Origen of Alexandria, writing in the early third century, echoes Clement's concern for ecclesial unity as a form of healing. In his ***Commentary on Matthew***, Origen reflects on the wounds caused by schisms in the Church and insists that healing requires both doctrinal integrity and charity. He cites Clement's admonition to the Corinthians as a paradigm of apostolic correction rooted in love. According to Origen, Clement's appeal to order and humility is not a mere call for submission, but a pastoral act aimed at restoring the Church's inner health. Origen draws from Clement's image of creation's harmony to argue that the Church, as the body of Christ, is most itself when each member functions in peace and mutual service, healed from pride and disobedience.[427]

[425] Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, 40.
[426]Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: Volume I- The Beginnings of Patristic Literature*, (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1990), 44.
[427]Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Book XIV, in *Origen: Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Ronald Heine (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 186–190.

Similarly, St. Irenaeus of Lyons, though not directly citing Clement, develops the same vision of ecclesial reconciliation rooted in apostolic tradition. In his ***Against Heresies***, Irenaeus warns against divisions caused by false teachers and praises those early bishops—such as Clement—for safeguarding apostolic order. He presents Clement as a model of fidelity to both truth and unity. Irenaeus' understanding of healing includes returning to the original apostolic teaching and maintaining communion with the bishops ordained in that line. This continuity is, for him, the surest sign of spiritual health. Thus, Clement's approach to reconciliation is vindicated and deepened in later patristic thought: healing the Church involves a return to apostolic roots, sacramental order, and fraternal charity.[428]

Quasten also highlights Clement's emphasis on intercessory prayer as a means of healing. Toward the end of his letter, Clement offers a long and deeply moving prayer for the Church, the world, and those in authority:

> *Look down in mercy, O Lord, upon Your people, and give us peace. Be our help and protector. Save those among us who are in trouble. Raise the fallen, show Yourself to the needy, heal the sick, turn back those of Your people who wander, feed the hungry, ransom our prisoners, raise up the weak, comfort the faint-hearted. Let all the nations know that You are God alone, and that Jesus Christ is Your servant, and we are Your people, the sheep of Your pasture.*[429]

This prayer illustrates how Clement views reconciliation as dependent on divine grace. The act of praying for others, even those who have caused division, demonstrates that healing flows from a heart aligned with God's mercy. It is not merely about resolving disputes, but about returning the community to a state of grace where love and truth meet.

Clement recalls the lives of the apostles and the sacrifices of the early martyrs as models of fidelity and peace. This appeal to tradition is not nostalgic but formative. According to Quasten,

[428] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, 3:2–3, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 415–418.
[429]Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* 59.

Clement believes that the memory of past witnesses binds the present community to its roots and inspires them to remain united. Healing, therefore, is also an act of remembering: recovering one's identity in the apostolic tradition and renewing the commitment to love, obedience, and mutual care.[430]

### 4.2.2 St. Clement of Alexndria (160- 215 AD)

St. Clement of Alexandria stands as an important figure in early Christian theology, distinguished for his synthesis of Hellenistic philosophy and Christian doctrine. Born in Athens and eventually leading the catechetical school in Alexandria, Clement developed a Christian humanism that sought to reconcile faith and reason, grace and virtue. His approach to reconciliation and healing is rooted not in juridical categories, but in a pedagogical and transformative vision shaped by divine wisdom (σοφία) and the Logos. For Clement, reconciliation is the restoration of the human person through the divine Logos, who guides the soul from ignorance and disintegration toward truth, virtue, and unity.

In his work *The Stromata* ("Miscellanies"), Clement proposes that healing is a journey of enlightenment and growth in virtue. He views sin as a form of ignorance, a labyrinth of separation from the divine, and so reconciliation becomes a transformative return to truth. He writes that Christ, the true Logos, "heals by teaching," and that the process of reconciliation involves the faithful transcending this ignorance through Christ's profound wisdom.[431]

In *The Instructor* (*Paedagogus*), Clement of Alexandria presents Christ as a divine teacher who heals the whole human person in three dimensions: spiritually, morally, and socially. Clement views reconciliation as a continuous and dynamic process that transforms every aspect of life. It involves a personal journey guided by Christ's teachings and example. He urges Christians

[430] Quasten, *Patrology: Volume I- The Beginnings of Patristic Literature*, 47.
[431] Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Book VI, Vol. 2, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994),509.

to forgive others just as they themselves have been forgiven by God. This forgiveness is not a one-time act but a way of life supported by virtues such as meekness and moderation. "Meekness is the method of the Logos," Clement says, showing that gentleness is the approach taken by Christ himself.[432]

For Clement, reconciliation is much more than solving conflicts. It requires Christians to live with constant gentleness and humility in all their relationships. In adopting this posture of the heart, they reflect the healing and teaching mission of Christ. Such living reconciliation brings peace to both the individual and the wider community.[433]

Clement portrays the Eucharist as a vital, mystical experience where reconciliation occurs both with God and with one's fellow believers. To partake in the Eucharist is to partake in a communal act of healing, a reuniting with God that transcends mere ritual. "We eat the Logos," Clement says, "so that we may become Logos-bearing," which implies that the reconciled life is both divine and communal, interwoven with the mystical body of the Church. Participation in the sacrament requires an active state of unity, repentance, and love, inviting each believer into a vivid, kaleidoscopic experience of divine healing.[434]

Modern patristic scholars have illuminated the philosophical and theological dimensions of Clement's vision. Eric Osborn, for example, highlights the influence of Platonism and Stoicism in Clement's understanding of reconciliation as moral and intellectual healing. Osborn observes that for Clement, the path to reconciliation involves the mind being transformed by divine wisdom. He writes, "Clement's reconciled Christian is a learner, a lover of wisdom, and a servant of peace."[435]

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[432] Clement of Alexandria, The *Stromata* ,510.
[433] Clement of Alexandria, The *Stromata* ,510.
[434] Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor (Paedagogus)*, Book III, in ***The Ante-Nicene Fathers***, Vol. 2, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 293.
[435] Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 112.

Henry Chadwick interprets Clement's ecclesial vision as one where reconciliation is a social and moral act that beckons Christians to a life of virtue and wisdom. He observes that for Clement, the Church is not a place of doctrinal correctness but a vibrant, verdant community where the faithful are invited to partake in the restoration of their relationship with God and one another. "Clement's reconciler," Chadwick writes, "is not a judge, but a teacher and friend."[436]

Clement's vision of reconciliation is further shaped by his view of Christian community as a reimagined, harmonious society. He calls for believers to embody peace and unity, transcending the divisions of the surrounding world. Chadwick argues that Clement criticizes societal fractures: class divisions, violence, and greed proposing instead a community marked by justice, love, and mutual care. Reconciliation is a moral and communal transformation that beckons Christians to live in unity with each other and with God, reflecting the healing power of divine truth.[437]

In sum, Clement of Alexandria articulates a profound theology of reconciliation that integrates personal healing, intellectual formation, moral transformation, and ecclesial unity. His vision invites the Church not only to teach forgiveness but to become a living community of healing, where knowledge and virtue are nourished by the Logos and manifest in the daily life of believers.

### 4.2.3. St. Basil the Great (329–379 AD)

Reconciliation and healing are at the heart of Christian life, and Saint Basil the Great offers a profound theological and pastoral vision of these realities. Born in Caesarea in Cappadocia,

[436] Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 34.
[437] Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*,112.

Basil was a theologian, bishop, and monastic reformer deeply committed to the unity and health of the Church. In his writings and actions, Basil linked reconciliation with the healing of the soul and the restoration of relationships, both within the Church and in society. For him, sin appeared as a moral transgression rooted in a deeper reality: a spiritual illness needing healing through divine grace. Basil viewed the Church as a "spiritual hospital," where the bishop served as a physician of souls, guiding them towards wholeness in Christ. Healing was thus an ecclesial and sacramental reality, inviting the faithful into communion with God and one another.[438]

Basil's pastoral ministry vividly illustrates his commitment to reconciliation, particularly in the context of the Arian controversy that fractured the unity of the early Church. As a bishop during times of intense doctrinal conflict, Basil employed not only theological precision but also profound charity. He tirelessly wrote letters to other bishops, seeking to bridge divides with patience and humility. His episcopal strategy emphasized dialogue rooted in shared faith rather than domination. Basil's approach to reconciliation emphasized the personal and relational character of ecclesial leadership, where unity was built through the bonds of brotherhood rather than political coercion.[439]

A key theological underpinning for Basil's vision of healing is his doctrine of the Holy Spirit, particularly as the Spirit's role in fostering unity and sanctification. In his treatise *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil teaches that the Spirit sanctifies individuals and binds the community together in love and peace. Healing, is about forgiveness and participation in divine life. The Spirit's work is to heal divisions and perfect communion, forming the Church as one body in Christ rather

[438] Paul Jonathan Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), 42.
[439] Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, 47.

than a mere assembly of individuals. This theological insight grounds reconciliation in the dynamic life of the Trinity, where human relationships reflect divine communion.[440]

Central to Basil's vision of healing is his reform of monastic life, which he designed as a concrete school of reconciliation and virtue. Basil rejected extreme individualism in monasticism and emphasized communal living, where mutual service, correction, and prayer would form the soul. Healing of the passions, such as pride, anger, and envy was achieved not through solitary asceticism alone, but through the often difficult, humbling experience of life with others. Philip Rousseau highlights that Basil's monastic communities were intended to mirror the ideal of the early Church, where the search for personal perfection was intrinsically linked to the reconciliation of the community.[441]

Beyond the monastic setting, Basil embodied reconciliation through his concrete social initiatives, especially in caring for the poor and the sick. His foundation of the *Basiliad*, an extraordinary complex including a hospital, hospice, and training facilities, manifested his belief that spiritual healing must be accompanied by physical and social healing. Basil's vision of the bishop extended beyond sacramental and liturgical duties to active social responsibility, aiming at the restoration of human dignity in all its forms. This vision called for the church, under the leadership of the bishop, to not only teach doctrine and administer sacraments but to actively engage in the social and physical healing of the community. Basil's role in founding charitable institutions, such as the *Basiliad* (a complex of hospices, hospitals, and orphanages), highlights his commitment to ensuring the Church's ministry was one of tangible action and care for the poor, the sick, and the needy. Healing thus had a public dimension: to heal the body politic by serving its most vulnerable members.[442]

[440] Fedwick, *The Church and the Charisma of Leadership in Basil of Caesarea*, 58.
[441] Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 123.
[442] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*,128.

### 4.3 Magisterial teachings

Magisterial teachings encompass the authoritative doctrinal pronouncements of the Catholic Church, articulated through ecumenical councils, papal encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, and other official documents. These teachings play a pivotal role in shaping Catholic theology and pastoral practice. In the context of reconciliation and healing, several magisterial texts provide deep insight into the Church's understanding of these themes. Chief among them are documents from the Second Vatican Council such as *Gaudium et Spes* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* as well as post-conciliar documents like *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus*, which further contextualize reconciliation within the African ecclesial experience.

#### 4.3.1 Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) marked a significant turning point in the Catholic Church's engagement with the modern world and its internal renewal. Among its sixteen documents, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) and *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism) offer a robust theological and pastoral framework for understanding reconciliation and healing.

##### 4.3.1.1 Gaudium et Spes

*Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, promulgated on December 7, 1965, by the Second Vatican Council, addresses the Church’s mission in the context of contemporary challenges. It emphasizes the dignity of the human person, the promotion of justice and peace, and the Church's solidarity with all humanity. Within this theological and pastoral framework, reconciliation emerges as a foundational principle, guiding

efforts to heal societal divisions and foster harmonious relationships among peoples and nations.[443]

The Council makes it clear that peace is not merely the absence of conflict or the result of political maneuvering. Rather, it is defined as "an enterprise of justice," rooted in the divine order willed by God and embedded in the fabric of creation. True peace, then, requires the establishment of justice, which in turn becomes the fertile ground for reconciliation. In this perspective, the healing of wounds, personal, social, and international, demands the pursuit of structures and relationships governed by truth and justice.[444]

At the heart of *Gaudium et Spes* lies the conviction that the divisions within humanity, whether between individuals, social groups, or nations, stem ultimately from the alienation of human beings from God due to sin. Thus, healing and reconciliation must address not only external conflicts but also the inner wounds of the human heart. The document proclaims that "Christ... fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (GS 22), thereby affirming that reconciliation with self, others, and God flows from a renewed understanding of the human vocation revealed in Christ.[445]

In its ethical reflections, *Gaudium et Spes* strongly condemns acts that degrade human dignity, including murder, genocide, torture, and slavery. These are denounced as "infamies" that "poison civilization" (GS 27). The text calls the Church and society to confront and rectify such injustices as a necessary path toward reconciliation and healing. In doing so, the Council

[443] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 199–200.
[444] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes.*, no. 78; see also Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 76 (1967), which echoes the same idea: "Development is the new name for peace."
[445] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22; see also John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), no. 10, where he develops this anthropology.

recognizes that reconciliation entails not only forgiveness but also the active restoration of justice and dignity to victims of oppression and violence.[446]

Moreover, *Gaudium et Spes* underscores the necessity of dialogue in the Church's reconciling mission. True healing, it asserts, cannot be imposed externally but must arise from patient, respectful, and truth-seeking encounters. The Council emphasizes that the Church must enter into dialogue with the modern world "with humility and love," engaging cultures and histories without compromising the Gospel. Such dialogue becomes a privileged path to embody Christ's reconciling love, breaking down walls of division and nurturing mutual understanding.[447]

The teachings of *Gaudium et Spes* provide critical principles for reconciliation, particularly in post conflict contexts. For example, the Rwandan experience following the 1994 genocide reveals how the Council's vision can guide national healing. The acknowledgment of historical wrongs, the pursuit of justice through reconciliation commissions, and the cultivation of forgiveness have shaped Rwanda's ongoing efforts to restore social cohesion. These efforts, rooted in truth and justice, illustrate how *Gaudium et Spes* continues to inspire global movements for peace, unity, and human dignity in the wake of deep wounds.[448]

#### 4.3.1.2 *Unitatis Redintegratio*

*Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism, was promulgated by the Second Vatican Council on November 21, 1964, with the aim of restoring unity among all Christians. The document emerged from the Church's recognition of the deep divisions that have fractured

[446] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 27; cf. Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Mary Thomas Noble, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1995), 395.
[447] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 92; see also Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, Expanded Edition, (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 209-211.
[448] Emmanuel Katongole, *Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting Faith after Genocide in Rwanda*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 65-82.

Christianity over the centuries and the urgent pastoral need to address them. The Council Fathers understood that such divisions weaken the Church's witness and contradict the will of Christ "that all may be one" (John 17:21). In light of the modern ecumenical movement and increasing inter-Christian contacts, the Council sought to offer a theological and pastoral response grounded in humility, charity, and truth.[449]

The decree opens by affirming that the restoration of Christian unity is one of the principal concerns of the Council. It calls all Catholics to engage in dialogue and collaboration with other baptized Christians, emphasizing that the unity of the Church is not a mere human project but a divine calling. The Council states: "Almost everyone, though in different ways, longs for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and sent forth into the world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God" (*UR* 1). This longing for unity is a sign of the Spirit's action in history, inviting all Christians to a renewed journey of reconciliation and communion.[450]

Significantly, *Unitatis Redintegratio* acknowledges that the blame for disunity does not lie with others alone. The Catholic Church herself bears responsibility for past divisions, and the document calls for sincere self-examination and repentance. Healing, therefore, must begin with an interior conversion of heart. The Council teaches that "there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion" (*UR* 7), making personal and ecclesial renewal a prerequisite for authentic reconciliation.[451]

The decree affirms that Christian division is a scandal to the world, one that obscures the Gospel and impedes the Church's mission. Reconciliation, then, is not optional but essential

[449] Vatican Council II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 1, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 340-341.
[450] John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), nos. 7-8.
[451] *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 7; see also Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibert, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011), 221-222.

for the life and witness of the Church. The Council encourages practical steps such as dialogue, theological discussion, common prayer, and cooperation in service. Unity is presented both as a gift of the Holy Spirit and as a responsibility entrusted to all the faithful, requiring patience, humility, and love.[452]

*Unitatis Redintegratio* also recognizes the spiritual and theological riches that exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. It acknowledges that other Christian communities preserve significant elements of truth and sanctification, including Scripture, sacraments, and authentic faith. This recognition fosters a spirit of healing and mutual respect, replacing the hostility of past polemics with a more constructive and appreciative engagement.[453]

Nevertheless, the document warns against superficial approaches to unity. True reconciliation, it insists, must not come at the expense of truth. The Catholic Church must remain faithful to the fullness of revelation entrusted to her, even as she enters into dialogue with others. Real unity can only be achieved through a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ. Dialogue, therefore, is not about compromising doctrine, but about clarifying truth and allowing the Spirit to lead all Christians to fullness in Christ.[454]

The ultimate goal of ecumenical engagement, according to *Unitatis Redintegratio*, is full, visible unity centered on the Eucharist. This unity reflects not merely institutional agreement, but the healing of the divisions that have wounded the Body of Christ. It is both a sign and instrument of the reconciliation Christ desires for the world. Thus, ecumenism is portrayed as a Spirit-led journey, rooted in prayer, truth, and love, culminating in restored communion under the one Shepherd.[455]

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[452] *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 5-8
[453] Benedict XVI, *Principles of Catholic Theology,* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 202-204.
[454] *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 11; cf. Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology,* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 87.
[455] *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 15; cf. Lumen Gentium, no. 14.

In this light, the teachings of *Unitatis Redintegratio* offer profound insights for contexts of deep division and violence. In post-genocide Rwanda, the Church has embraced the principles of dialogue, conversion, and healing as essential to national and ecclesial reconciliation. The document's emphasis on acknowledging historical fault, seeking truth, and fostering communion provides a theological foundation for rebuilding relationships fractured by ethnic hatred. By rooting reconciliation in humility, shared faith, and a desire for unity, Rwanda's journey echoes the Council's call to restore harmony within the Church and society.[456]

### 4.3.2 *Ecclesia in Africa*

*Ecclesia in Africa* is the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, promulgated on September 14, 1995, following the First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 1994. This landmark document was born in a time of immense hope and grave challenge for the African continent, particularly in the wake of events such as the Rwandan genocide and civil conflicts across multiple regions. The Church in Africa is called to be a place of true reconciliation, where forgiven and reconciled members can witness Christ's peace and bring healing to the world. In this context, the Church in Africa is called upon to embody true reconciliation, becoming a model of forgiveness and mutual understanding.

> Despite the modern civilization of the "global village", in Africa as elsewhere in the world the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone. Wars, conflicts and racist and xenophobic attitudes still play too large a role in the world of human relations. The Church in Africa is aware that it has to become for all, through the witness borne by its own sons and daughters, a place of true reconciliation. Forgiven and mutually reconciled, these sons and daughters will thus be able to bring to the world the forgiveness and reconciliation which Christ our Peace (Eph 2:14) offers to humanity through his Church. Otherwise the world will look more and more like a

[456] Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice, *Reconciling All Things: A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008), 43-55.

> battlefield, where only selfish interests count and the law of force prevails, the law which fatally distances humanity from the hoped-for civilization of love.[457]

Central to the message of *Ecclesia in Africa* is the concept of the Church as the Family of God, an image that emphasizes solidarity, forgiveness, mutual respect, and care for one another. This theological model offers a culturally resonant vision for African societies deeply marked by tribal affiliations and communal identities. The metaphor of family provides a framework for fostering reconciliation and unity in a continent often fractured by historical grievances and ethnic divisions. Pope John Paul II explicitly states that the Church "must continue to be an instrument of reconciliation, justice, and peace".[458]

The document recognizes that Africa is a continent deeply wounded by conflict, poverty, and the legacy of colonialism. The Pope denounces the causes of disunity and violence, such as tribalism, racism, corruption, and the abuse of power. These are seen not only as social or political issues, but as spiritual challenges that call for conversion of heart. Healing, in this light, requires both structural transformation and the inner renewal of individuals and communities. The Church, through her sacramental and prophetic mission, is called to be a sign of hope and a builder of peace amid suffering and despair.[459]

A key emphasis of *Ecclesia in Africa* is the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation as pathways to authentic peace. The document affirms that "forgiveness is first of all a personal choice, a decision of the heart," and stresses the need for the Church to be a place where past wounds can be acknowledged and transformed through grace.[460] This message resonates deeply in post-genocide Rwanda and other regions where violence has devastated lives and

[457]John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, (14 September 1995), n. 79: AAS 88 (1996), 163-164.
[458] John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63; cf. African Synod, *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993), nos. 32-36.
[459] *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 70; cf. Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997), 159.
[460] John Paul II , *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 83.

communities. The Church is encouraged to support truth-telling, healing memories, and restorative justice in order to foster lasting peace.[461]

The document also promotes inculturation,the respectful integration of African cultural values with the Gospel as a necessary step toward a more effective evangelization. Reconciliation must engage African traditions of community, storytelling, and ritual, enabling people to experience healing in ways that resonate with their historical and spiritual context. The African concept of ubuntu, which emphasizes shared humanity and interdependence, aligns naturally with Christian reconciliation and is encouraged as a cultural resource for the Church's mission.[462]

Furthermore, *Ecclesia in Africa* calls for the promotion of justice and human rights as essential dimensions of healing. The document insists that evangelization must include the transformation of unjust structures and the defense of human dignity. It points out the prophetic role of the Church in speaking out against oppression and injustice, especially in situations where civil authorities fail to uphold the common good. In this sense, reconciliation is not only personal and ecclesial but also political and societal.[463]

In its closing exhortations, Pope John Paul II entrusts the African Church with the mission of becoming a "witness of reconciliation" for the world. He invites the faithful to walk the path of peace, trust in God's providence, and build a Church that reflects the love and mercy of Christ. The message of *Ecclesia in Africa* remains profoundly relevant today as African nations continue their journeys of recovery and healing from past and present traumas. It offers a deeply

[461] John Paul II , *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 83; see also Emmanuel Katongole, *Born from Lament: The Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 118-120.
[462] John Paul II , *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 59; cf. Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, *The Church as Family: African Ecclesiology in Its Social Context,* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2000), 45- 47.
[463] John Paul II ,*Ecclesia in Africa*, nos. 105–106; cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), nos. 191-197.

rooted, theologically rich vision for rebuilding the moral and spiritual fabric of society through the Church's commitment to reconciliation, justice, and peace.[464]

### 4.3.3 *Africae Munus*

*Africae Munus* is the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI, promulgated on November 19, 2011, in Ouidah, Benin, following the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops held in 2009. Issued fifteen years after *Ecclesia in Africa*, this document comes at a time when the African continent continues to bear the scars of conflict, poverty, injustice, and social fragmentation, but also displays signs of vitality, hope, and spiritual strength. *Africae Munus* develops a mature and Christ-centered vision of reconciliation, justice, and peace, rooted in the Gospel and attentive to Africa's specific historical and cultural context.

In the heart of the Christian message lies the call to reconciliation, both with God and with one another. It's a concept that transcends mere political aspirations, for without the inner transformation that reconciliation brings, efforts towards peace remain incomplete.[465] The Synod emphasized the intrinsic connection between personal purification and the establishment of justice and peace, recognizing that true humanity cannot flourish without a relationship with God. Reconciliation finds its roots in God's grace, which extends a hand to mend the broken bonds between humanity and the divine. Through Christ's redemptive work, humanity finds restoration in the Father's love. This reconciliation encompasses both vertical and horizontal dimensions, fostering communion between humanity and God, as well as among individuals.[466]

[464] John Paul II , *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 117.

[465] Benedict XVI, *Address to the Roman Curia* (21 December 2009): AAS 102 (2010), 37.
[466] Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* (19 November 2011), no.19-21. AAS 104 (2012), 105-108.

Illustrated vividly through the parable of the prodigal son, reconciliation demands an acknowledgment of wrongdoing and a restoration of relationships. In the African context, testimonies abound of the Spirit's transformative power, healing the wounds of victims and perpetrators alike, fostering unity in fractured societies. As a result, after long periods of war nations are able to rediscover peace, and societies deeply rent by civil war or genocide are able to rebuild their unity. It is by granting and receiving forgiveness.[467]

True reconciliation, grounded in the courage to forgive and the commitment to seek justice, is the foundation of lasting peace and societal healing. When individuals and communities confront past injustices and embrace the truth, they open the way to genuine restoration. This path leads toward a future freed from the scars of history, built instead on hope, renewal, and a shared commitment to new beginnings. Authentic reconciliation does not erase painful memories, but transforms them into sources of wisdom and strength. It demands patience, humility, and perseverance, recognizing that healing is a gradual process that requires the participation of all. Only through such a deep and honest journey can societies overcome division and truly flourish in unity and peace.[468]

To achieve genuine reconciliation and embody the spirituality of communion that emanates from it, the Church requires individuals who are deeply rooted in Christ and draw sustenance from His teachings and the sacraments. These individuals, as they endeavor to deepen their relationship with God, can actively participate in fostering unity within the community of christians. They bear witness to reconciliation, justice, and peace, following the footsteps of Christ, even to the extent of sacrificing their lives if necessary.[469]

[467] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* , (25 December 2005), 28: AAS 98 (2006), 238-240.
[468] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 239.
[469] Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus* art. 34.

In response to the wounds of division and hatred in African societies, the Church acknowledges its own need for healing. The sacrament of Reconciliation binds and heals hearts, repairing bonds between individuals and God, and within society. Individual confession holds utmost importance, irreplaceable by any other act of reconciliation. The Church encourages the restoration of Reconciliation's dual dimension, personal and communal. Communities lacking priests can experience penance and reconciliation through non-sacramental forms. However, these can't substitute for the sacrament itself. Annual days or weeks of reconciliation are recommended, aiming for a continent-wide Year of Reconciliation, fostering forgiveness and healing.[470]

In fostering reconciliation, the Church emphasizes the importance of annual days or weeks dedicated to this purpose, advocating for a continent-wide Year of Reconciliation. These initiatives seek divine forgiveness for past wrongs and aim to mend relationships both within the Church and society, promoting unity, justice, and peace.

Furthermore, the Church, through the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), is poised to coordinate these efforts and collaborate with the Holy See to facilitate a continent-wide Year of Reconciliation. The extraordinary Jubilee Year served as a collective expression of gratitude and supplication for the gifts of reconciliation, justice, and peace from the Holy Spirit, uniting the Church in Africa and neighboring islands with the universal Church in a shared journey of healing and renewal.[471]

[470] Benedict XVI, Africae Munus art. 157.
[471] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Poenitentia* (2 December 1984),n. 23, AAS 77 (1985), 233-235.

### 4.3.4 Pastoral Letter by the Rwandan Bishops

The *Pastoral Letter of the Rwandan Bishops* issued on March 25, 2019, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi, stands as a significant magisterial document from the local Church. Published during the Solemnity of the Annunciation, the letter is both a call to national memory and a theological reflection on the journey of healing, forgiveness, and unity in post-genocide Rwanda. It affirms the responsibility of the Catholic Church in contributing to reconciliation, not merely as a socio-political project but as a deeply Christian mission rooted in the Paschal mystery.

The bishops begin by inviting all the faithful to see memory as a sacred duty. Recalling the genocide is not only about justice for the victims, but about transformation for the nation. The letter explains that the Church in Rwanda had previously dedicated three consecutive years to unity and reconciliation: the Year of Unity (2016), the Year of the Priest (2017), and the Year of Mercy (2018). The bishops thus frame the 25th commemoration as a spiritual moment for all Christians to reflect on their mission to be "light and salt" in a country still in the process of healing.[472]

Central to the letter is the emphasis on repentance and forgiveness. The bishops highlight that Rwandan Christians are called to confront the past with courage and humility. They underline that many baptized members participated in or failed to prevent the genocide, and therefore call the Church to be a space of conversion. Citing John 15:12, the bishops insist that authentic Christian discipleship must be measured by love especially the love that overcomes ethnic and historical hatred. Forgiveness is presented not as forgetting, but as a courageous decision to rebuild and reconcile in truth.[473]

[472] Conference Episcopale du Rwanda, *Lettre pastorale des Évêques Catholiques du Rwanda à l'occasion de la 25e Commémoration du Génocide perpétré contre les Tutsi en 1994*, 25 mars 2019.no.1-3
[473] Conference Episcopale du Rwanda, no. 6.

The pastoral letter also addresses the continued wounds in Rwandan society. The bishops note that although many reconciliation efforts have been made, deep moral and social injuries still persist. They caution against superficial harmony and urge Christians to become active agents of compassion and peace in their communities. The letter affirms that healing is an ongoing process, not a singular event. In this regard, the Eucharist is presented as a central sacrament of reconciliation. The bishops describe the Eucharist as the heart of Christian unity, stating that receiving the Body and Blood of Christ must lead to renewed relationships among the faithful.[474]

Furthermore, the bishops turn their pastoral concern toward vulnerable groups, including orphans, widows, the imprisoned, and the elderly—especially those who carry burdens of grief, shame, or isolation. They call on all Christians to accompany these individuals with practical love and spiritual solidarity. The letter highlights that reconciliation also involves the reintegration of former perpetrators into society with truth, justice, and mercy. True Christian community, they assert, must embrace all who seek forgiveness and conversion, without ignoring the needs of those who still suffer.[475]

The Pastoral letter is a clear expression of the Rwandan episcopate's magisterial voice on reconciliation. It integrates theological principles with national realities, emphasizing memory, repentance, Eucharistic spirituality, and social responsibility. By encouraging the faithful to live out the Gospel of reconciliation in daily life, the bishops reaffirm the Church's vocation as both reconciled and reconciling. As such, this document serves as a foundational text for understanding local Catholic engagement in Rwanda's healing journey.

[474] Conference Episcopale du Rwanda, no. 7–9.
[475] Conference Episcopale du Rwanda, no.10–12.

**Integrative Reflection**

Chapter Four explores the Catholic Church's teaching on reconciliation and healing, highlighting their scriptural roots, patristic insights, and magisterial emphasis. It shows how the Church fosters restored relationships, spiritual renewal, and societal peace through divine grace and transformative love.

Reconciliation and healing are central themes throughout the Sacred Scriptures, reflecting God's ongoing desire to restore broken relationships and bring about human wholeness. The Scriptures present reconciliation as a divine initiative, particularly fulfilled through Christ, who bridges the divide between God and humanity. This reconciliation also extends to relationships among people, leading to peace and mutual restoration. Healing is closely connected to this theme, involving both the physical and spiritual restoration of individuals and communities.
In the Old Testament, reconciliation begins with the consequences of the Fall in Genesis 3, where humanity's disobedience causes alienation from God and from one another. Reconciliation is presented as an active process involving repentance, forgiveness, and restored relationships. The story of Joseph and his brothers is a powerful example, where Joseph's decision to forgive those who betrayed him becomes a model of divine mercy and family healing. The Old Testament legal codes also support reconciliation through social justice mechanisms.

This call to reconciliation is rooted in the covenant between God and Israel. It is not limited to individual acts but is seen as a communal and ongoing process of returning to God. The prophets, such as Micah, emphasize that reconciliation requires justice, mercy, and humility. The Psalms serve as prayers of confession and renewal, especially Psalm 51, which expresses deep contrition and hope in divine mercy. These texts help believers realign themselves with God and with each other, aiming toward a harmonious community.

Healing in the Old Testament is also understood within this context of restoration. The creation narrative in Genesis 1–2 reveals God's original intention for a world of health and harmony. After the Fall, sickness and death appear as disruptions to this divine order. Although not all illness is attributed to sin, there is a strong link between moral and physical well-being. Psalms such as 32, 38, and 103 illustrate how healing involves both physical recovery and the forgiveness of sins. God is portrayed as the ultimate healer, emphasizing His role in restoring life and health to His people.

In the New Testament, reconciliation becomes central to Jesus' mission. He teaches that reconciliation with others is essential before worship, as in Matthew 5. Luke's Gospel presents Jesus as actively seeking out sinners, welcoming them before they even repent, especially in the parable of the prodigal son. Forgiveness becomes the core requirement for reconciliation, as shown in the parable of the unforgiving servant.

Healing in the New Testament is deeply personal and relational. Jesus' miracles not only cured physical ailments but also restored dignity and community belonging. His compassion reached out to the excluded and broken, showing that true healing involves spiritual, social, and emotional restoration. Jesus empowered his disciples to continue this ministry, and the early Church practiced healing as both a sign of divine mercy and a path to faith and belonging. Healing was thus understood as a continuation of Jesus' mission and a visible sign of the Kingdom of God.

The Church's tradition has long emphasized reconciliation and healing, as demonstrated by figures like St. Clement of Rome, St. Clement of Alexandria, and St. Basil the Great.

St. Clement of Rome, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, addresses conflict within the Church, urging humility, obedience, and respect for established leaders. He emphasizes that division is a grave sin against the Body of Christ and calls for the community to embrace peace

through repentance and obedience. Clement draws on the harmony of creation as a model for Church unity, illustrating that if creation itself is reconciled in obedience, the Church should reflect the same order and unity. He views the Church as a living sacrament of reconciliation, linking proper ministry and worship with the restoration of peace. Clement's emphasis on intercessory prayer and remembrance of apostolic tradition underscores the importance of divine grace in healing divisions.

St. Clement of Alexandria presents a vision of reconciliation that intertwines knowledge, divine pedagogy, and moral transformation. In his works, he portrays Christ as a divine teacher who heals by imparting wisdom, guiding believers to transcend ignorance and grow in virtue. Reconciliation, for Clement, is a continuous process involving personal transformation and communal harmony. He emphasizes the role of the Eucharist as a mystical experience where believers unite with God and each other, reflecting the healing power of divine truth. Clement's integration of Stoic and Platonic thought highlights the transformative journey of the soul towards divine likeness.

St. Basil the Great offers a pastoral vision of reconciliation, viewing the Church as a "spiritual hospital" where the bishop acts as a physician of souls. He addresses doctrinal conflicts, such as the Arian controversy, with theological precision and profound charity, emphasizing dialogue and shared faith. Basil's theology highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in fostering unity and sanctification, grounding reconciliation in the dynamic life of the Trinity. His reforms in monastic life promote communal living, mutual service, and the healing of passions through humility and prayer. Basil's establishment of charitable institutions, like the Basiliad, demonstrates his commitment to social and physical healing, extending the Church's ministry to the most vulnerable.

Magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church provide profound insights into reconciliation and healing, emphasizing their interconnection in restoring both spiritual and societal harmony.

The Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes* underscores that true peace arises from justice, which is rooted in reconciliation with God and among individuals. It highlights that societal divisions stem from a deeper rupture with God caused by sin. Healing, therefore, necessitates addressing both external conflicts and internal wounds. The document condemns offenses against human dignity, such as murder and slavery, advocating for justice as a pathway to healing. Dialogue, characterized by humility and mutual respect, is presented as essential for authentic reconciliation and healing. These principles have been instrumental in guiding nations like Rwanda toward healing after tragedies like the genocide.

*Unitatis Redintegratio,* another document from the Second Vatican Council, focuses on the restoration of Christian unity. It acknowledges the pain caused by divisions within the Christian community and calls for sincere self-examination and repentance. Healing these divisions requires both spiritual renewal and practical efforts, such as dialogue and shared prayer. The document emphasizes that reconciliation is not optional but vital for the Church's witness to the Gospel. By recognizing the sanctity present in other Christian communities, it fosters a healing attitude that replaces hostility with appreciation, aiming for full communion and unity. Pope John Paul II's *Ecclesia in Africa* addresses the Church's mission in Africa, highlighting evangelization, dialogue, justice, and reconciliation as essential components. It emphasizes that healing societal divisions requires transforming relationships through love and forgiveness. The Church is called to be a place of true reconciliation, where forgiven and reconciled members can witness Christ's peace. This vision aligns with Africa's journey toward healing after conflicts, such as Rwanda's post-genocide reconciliation efforts.

Pope Benedict XVI's *Africae Munus* further explores reconciliation's theological underpinnings and practical implications in Africa. It asserts that true healing and peace stem from inner transformation and a renewed relationship with God. Reconciliation encompasses both vertical communion with God and horizontal relationships among individuals. The document encourages the Church to facilitate healing through sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to promote initiatives like annual days of reconciliation. By embracing forgiveness and justice, societies can transform painful memories into sources of wisdom, fostering unity and lasting peace.

# CHAPTER FIVE: PROMOTION OF RECONCILIATION AND HEALING IN BUTARE DIOCESE

## Introduction

This chapter presents the pastoral and theological implications of the research findings and offers practical recommendations for promoting reconciliation and healing in Butare Diocese. Drawing from scriptural, magisterial, and empirical insights, it explores the Church's role in guiding Rwandan society toward restoration. The findings reveal both progress and challenges, highlighting the need for holistic pastoral strategies. The recommendations that follow are rooted in Catholic social teaching and the lived experiences of survivors, perpetrators, and Church agents in the Diocese of Butare.

## 5.1 Research findings on Reconciliation and Healing

The findings presented in this section are the result of theological reflection, pastoral observation, and field-based interviews conducted within the Diocese of Butare. They highlight the ongoing challenges, emerging patterns, and promising signs in the Church's ministry of reconciliation and healing.

### 5.1.1 Ongoing Trauma and Need for Holistic Healing

The genocide of 1994 left enduring scars in the lives of both survivors and perpetrators, many of whom continue to suffer from deep psychological, emotional, and spiritual trauma. While there have been notable efforts toward reconciliation, a significant number of people remain burdened by unprocessed grief, unresolved guilt, and social isolation. Healing in such a context must go beyond occasional moments of forgiveness and instead encompass a comprehensive pastoral strategy that includes spiritual accompaniment, psychological support, and community reintegration. The current diocesan structures offer some pastoral care, but there is a marked

lack of trauma-informed, holistic approaches that address the body, mind, and soul together. This gap calls for a renewed theological and pastoral focus on healing as a long-term, relational process rooted in both the sacraments and the Catholic social teaching. Holistic healing is foundational to any genuine reconciliation effort in the Diocese of Butare.[476]

### 5.1.2 Role of the Church as Moral and Spiritual Authority

Throughout the interviews and case studies, the Catholic Church in Butare Diocese emerged as a vital and trusted moral authority. Survivors, perpetrators, and ordinary Christians consistently looked to the Church for moral guidance, spiritual direction, and opportunities for reconciliation. The Church's sacramental life especially the Eucharist, Confession, and pastoral preaching remains central to many people's experiences of healing. However, the moral credibility of the Church has also been challenged by instances of silence or complicity during the genocide. This has created an urgent call for the Church not only to teach about reconciliation but also to embody it. Participants expressed a desire for a more prophetic and transparent Church, one that courageously addresses past failures while leading communities into a future of hope. Thus, the Church's role as a spiritual and moral guide must be continually renewed through both institutional repentance and pastoral authenticity.[477]

### 5.1.3 Success of Grassroots and Parish-Based Initiatives

Several grassroots initiatives within the diocese have shown measurable success in promoting reconciliation and healing. Parish-level programs such as Justice and Peace Commissions, solidarity groups, women's prayer circles, and penitential services have provided spaces for truth-telling, mutual forgiveness, and social reintegration. These initiatives are often community-led, context-sensitive, and spiritually grounded, allowing people to heal in familiar

[476] Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 15-16.
[477] Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 125-127.

and supportive environments. Particularly effective are those that combine scriptural reflection, prayer, and small-group sharing with practical outreach to the poor and vulnerable. While many of these efforts operate on limited resources and volunteer leadership, their results are deeply transformative. Their success highlights the importance of subsidiarity in pastoral care where healing is facilitated not only from the top but from within the community itself.[478] These models can be expanded and strengthened as part of a broader diocesan commitment to reconciliation.

### 5.1.4 Youth Engagement and Historical Memory

One of the notable gaps in reconciliation efforts is the minimal engagement of young people born after the genocide. These youth carry inherited trauma and conflicting narratives about Rwanda's past, often shaped by family stories, media, or silence. Many feel disconnected from the Church's reconciliation programs, which tend to focus on survivors and perpetrators of the first generation. Without intentional catechesis, historical education, and pastoral outreach tailored to youth, there is a risk of generational disconnection from the Church's healing mission. Young people interviewed expressed a desire for honest dialogue, creative expression, and safe spaces where they could process both pain and hope. This finding underscores the need to integrate youth into reconciliation processes not merely as observers but as participants.[479] Engaging the post-genocide generation is essential for the sustainability of peace and for nurturing a Church that remains relevant across time and memory.

### 5.1.5 Need for Consistent Training and Formation of Pastoral Agents

Pastoral agents including priests, religious, catechists, and lay leaders play a pivotal role in the healing process, often serving as the first point of contact for individuals in spiritual or

[478] James Jay Carney, "*A Generation After Genocide: Catholic Reconciliation in Rwanda*," Commonweal 143, no. 9 (2016): 12-16.
[479] Zachariah Mampilly and Laura Seay, "Inside the Youth-Led Movements that Are Changing Africa," *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 3 (2017): 45.

emotional distress. However, the research revealed a critical need for more consistent and specialized formation in areas such as trauma-informed care, conflict resolution, theological anthropology, and reconciliation theology. Many pastoral agents serve with great generosity but without sufficient preparation to handle the complex wounds left by genocide. This can lead to burnout, superficial interventions, or missed opportunities for deep healing. The diocese would benefit from creating a structured and continuous formation program that equips its leaders with both pastoral skills and theological depth.[480]Empowered and well-formed pastoral agents are essential for building trust, fostering lasting reconciliation, and ensuring that the Church remains a credible witness to Christ's healing presence in the world.

### 5.1.6 Hope and Signs of Spiritual Renewal

Amid the pain and complexity, the study also uncovered remarkable signs of spiritual renewal in the Diocese of Butare. In communities where truth-telling, repentance, and forgiveness have been embraced, participants testified to experiencing genuine inner peace and communal healing. Liturgical celebrations particularly during Holy Week and commemoration periods have become moments of shared grief, faith, and transformation. Testimonies of reconciliation between survivors and perpetrators, often made public during retreats or community events, serve as powerful witnesses to the Gospel's ability to renew even the most broken of relationships. These signs of hope should not be underestimated.[481]They point to the deep spiritual potential within Rwandan Catholicism to move beyond trauma toward resurrection. The presence of hope within suffering is a profound theological insight that must shape the Church's future strategies. The task now is to nurture these signs into lasting movements of grace and renewal.

[480] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,* (Vatican : Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), no. 548-552.
[481] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness,* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 268-270.

### 5.2 Recommendations for promoting Reconciliation and Healing in Butare Diocese

The journey toward reconciliation and healing after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda remains ongoing. The Church, especially within Butare Diocese, has made commendable efforts in fostering spiritual and communal restoration among survivors and perpetrators. However, more targeted and structured initiatives are needed to ensure a truly holistic and sustainable process. The following recommendations emerge from the findings of this research and are proposed as practical and theological paths to reinforce reconciliation and healing in Rwanda, particularly in Butare Diocese. Each recommendation is grounded in Catholic social teaching, contextual realities, and best pastoral practices.

#### 5.2.1 Strengthen Church-Based Healing Ministries

The Diocese of Butare, and the Catholic Church in Rwanda more broadly, should strengthen and institutionalize church-based healing ministries as a permanent response to the wounds left by the genocide. Healing ministries should go beyond occasional liturgical commemorations and become a core component of the diocesan pastoral plan. This includes trained pastoral agents in trauma counseling, spiritual accompaniment, and reconciliation facilitation. Survivors continue to experience psychological wounds, and many perpetrators also live with guilt, isolation, and shame. Both groups require structured pastoral support rooted in Christian hope and compassion.

These healing ministries could be coordinated through existing diocesan offices, such as Caritas or Justice and Peace Commissions, but with a specific department or unit dedicated to emotional and spiritual healing. Moreover, parish priests and religious men and women should receive ongoing formation in trauma-informed pastoral care. Periodic retreats, healing liturgies, and reconciliation encounters between survivors and perpetrators could be part of this

effort. A sacramental approach to healing, centered on the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, should support all initiatives.

As Miroslav Volf insightfully notes, "Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans even as I exclude myself from the community of sinners."[482] Healing requires both personal and collective recognition of sin, woundedness, and the need for grace. The Church must be the first to model such grace.

### 5.2.2 Integrate Holistic Reconciliation Programs in Seminary Formation

In the post-genocide context of Rwanda, seminary and religious formation must go beyond doctrinal theology and traditional pastoral training. There is an urgent need to include modules on reconciliation theology, trauma healing, restorative justice, and peacebuilding in the curriculum of major seminaries and novitiates. The clergy and religious men and women formed today will minister to communities still grappling with collective trauma, moral injury, and broken relationships. Without a thorough preparation in these areas, future pastoral agents may lack the tools to guide survivors and perpetrators toward genuine healing and transformation.

The Major Seminary of Nyakibanda, given its national scope, could become a model of integrated reconciliation formation by offering contextualized theology rooted in African realities. Seminaries should incorporate practical exposure such as workshops with survivors and perpetrators, interdisciplinary sessions involving psychologists and legal experts, and immersion in communities where reconciliation is taking place. This would ensure that seminarians not only learn the theoretical dimensions of reconciliation but also develop the

[482] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 125.

spiritual maturity and emotional intelligence needed to accompany others on the path to healing.

Furthermore, partnerships between seminaries and Church commissions like Justice and Peace or Caritas can strengthen this formation, providing real-life experiences and reflective learning. Pastoral internships could be structured around reconciliation ministry, offering young future priests a chance to listen, reflect, and serve in places still bearing the wounds of genocide.
As Emmanuel Katongole asserts, "There will be no genuine reconciliation in Africa without a reform of pastoral formation centered on a spirituality of compassion, memory, and hope."[483]To form ministers of reconciliation is to form builders of peace. This transformation in formation is not optional; it is foundational to the Church's credibility and mission in a post-conflict society.

### 5.2.3 Promote Interpersonal and Community Dialogue Platforms

One of the essential means of building sustainable reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda is the promotion of interpersonal and community dialogue platforms. The horrors of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi were not only the result of political manipulation but also of long-standing ruptures in human relationships at the community level. Healing these wounds requires more than silence and coexistence; it demands active engagement through structured dialogue. In this light, the Church should invest in creating safe, regular, and spiritually grounded spaces where victims and perpetrators can meet, share, listen, and gradually restore trust.

These platforms can be organized at the parish or diocesan level and led by trained facilitators who understand trauma, non-violent communication, and spiritual accompaniment. They

[483] Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 182.

should involve storytelling, truth-telling, mutual recognition of suffering, and faith-based rituals such as prayer, confession, and symbolic acts of peace. Experiences from "reconciliation villages" have shown that facilitated dialogue can generate not only forgiveness but also communal rebuilding and shared projects. The Church, through its moral authority and pastoral presence, is uniquely positioned to mediate and model this kind of restorative interaction.

Moreover, these forums should not only focus on past violence but also address current tensions, fears, and prejudices that may still exist beneath the surface. Youth, especially those born after the genocide, should be involved in these conversations to break the cycle of inherited trauma and promote a new culture of peace and empathy. As Desmond Tutu emphasized in his reflections on post-apartheid South Africa, "True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end, it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing."[484] In this spirit, dialogue becomes not a threat but a path toward authentic communion.

### 5.2.4 Support Socio-Economic Reintegration of Survivors and Perpetrators

Reconciliation in Rwanda cannot be achieved solely through spiritual or emotional healing. For reconciliation to be complete and sustainable, it must also address the socio-economic realities of those affected by the genocide. Survivors often face poverty, trauma, and marginalization, while many perpetrators, after serving prison sentences or returning from exile, struggle to reintegrate into society. The Church must recognize the economic dimension of reconciliation and actively collaborate with organizations such as Caritas Rwanda, local cooperatives, and government agencies to create joint livelihood programs that support both survivors and repentant perpetrators.

[484]Tutu, 55.

Initiatives such as microfinance opportunities, shared farming projects, vocational training, and community-based businesses can offer practical means for rebuilding trust and cooperation. These programs should be designed to foster not only income generation but also shared responsibility and mutual interdependence. Working together in such contexts helps to restore broken relationships and rebuild community bonds. Moreover, involving both survivors and former perpetrators in the same economic activities promotes a concrete and symbolic form of reconciliation by enabling them to rebuild life together.

The Church should take the lead in identifying local needs and mobilizing both internal and external support. Parishes can become centers of socio-economic empowerment, linking pastoral care with development. This approach is in line with the Church's mission to promote human dignity and integral development. As Pope Benedict XVI emphasized in *Caritas in Veritate*, "Development is the new name for peace."[485] When people have the means to live with dignity, the ground for resentment and mistrust shrinks. Reconciliation then becomes more than a moral aspiration; it becomes a way of life supported by tangible improvements in well-being and justice.

### 5.2.5 Strengthen Collaboration with Government and Civil Society

Reconciliation and healing after genocide are complex and multifaceted processes that cannot be undertaken by the Church alone. They require the concerted efforts of multiple sectors of society. Therefore, it is crucial that the Catholic Church in Rwanda, particularly in Butare Diocese, strengthen its collaboration with government institutions, civil society organizations, and non-governmental partners. While the Church possesses spiritual authority and moral influence, state institutions hold administrative power and policy-making capacity. Together, they can offer a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to national reconciliation.

[485] Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009), no. 8.

The Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement already plays a leading role in shaping public memory, policy formation, and mobilization of communities around unity and reconciliation. The Church should actively seek partnerships with this ministry to align pastoral strategies with national reconciliation frameworks. Joint programs in civic education, public dialogue, peacebuilding workshops, and memorial services can enhance the credibility and reach of both Church and state initiatives.

In addition, civil society organizations that specialize in trauma healing, justice advocacy, and social development bring valuable expertise and resources. The Church should consider forming structured alliances or networks with such groups to share knowledge, co-develop interventions, and ensure that reconciliation is approached from both a spiritual and psychosocial perspective. These collaborations can be formalized through memorandum of understanding or community partnership agreements that respect the identity and mission of each stakeholder.

As John Paul Lederach, a leading scholar in peacebuilding, explains, "Reconciliation must be rooted in the context of relationships and supported by institutions that embody moral imagination."[486] The Church and civil institutions together can serve as those supporting structures, nurturing reconciliation not as a one-time event but as a long-term, relational process. By walking hand in hand, they can build a more unified and healed Rwanda.

### 5.2.6 Develop a National Pastoral Plan for Reconciliation

Given the magnitude of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and its enduring consequences, the Church in Rwanda must adopt a more structured and unified approach to reconciliation. While various diocesan initiatives exist, the lack of a coordinated national vision limits their

[486] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35.

overall impact. It is therefore highly recommended that the Episcopal Conference of Rwanda develop and implement a National Pastoral Plan for Reconciliation. Such a plan would provide theological grounding, pastoral strategies, and clear objectives that guide all dioceses, parishes, and religious institutions in their efforts to promote healing and unity.

This pastoral plan should be rooted in Catholic social teaching and tailored to the particular needs of Rwandan society. It should include core components such as truth-telling, forgiveness, restorative justice, trauma healing, community dialogue, and memorialization. The plan should also offer pastoral guidelines for engaging with both survivors and perpetrators, especially in mixed communities where historical wounds remain sensitive. Training materials, liturgical resources, and spiritual retreats based on reconciliation themes should be part of the national rollout.

A national plan would also encourage collaboration between bishops, priests, religious men and women, catechists, and lay leaders across the country. It would ensure that every local Church is working toward the same goals, while remaining attentive to the unique challenges of each region. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be included to assess the plan's impact over time and to make necessary adjustments.

As the African Synod emphasized in *Ecclesia in Africa*, the Church must become "a community that is reconciled and reconciling, a place of pardon, peace and mutual love."[487] A National Pastoral Plan for Reconciliation would help the Rwandan Church live out this vocation with clarity, compassion, and effectiveness in service of national healing.

[487] John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), no. 79.

### 5.2.7 Document Testimonies of Reconciliation and Healing

An essential yet often overlooked dimension of reconciliation is the preservation of lived experiences. In Rwanda, countless stories of pain, forgiveness, courage, and restoration have unfolded in the aftermath of the genocide. These stories, whether from survivors, perpetrators, or witnesses, form a vital part of the nation's moral and spiritual history. Documenting these testimonies is not only an act of remembrance but also a pastoral duty of the Church. The Diocese of Butare and others should prioritize the systematic collection and preservation of personal and community narratives related to reconciliation and healing.

This work can be undertaken through diocesan commissions or special reconciliation offices, with collaboration from academic institutions, youth ministries, and religious communities. Written records, audio recordings, video interviews, and artistic expressions can all serve to capture the complexity and depth of reconciliation experiences. Such testimonies offer powerful tools for education, catechesis, and intergenerational learning. They also serve as safeguards against revisionism and denial, ensuring that future generations do not forget the human cost of hatred or the power of grace.

As theologian Robert Schreiter observes, “The process of reconciliation is shaped not only by theology and ritual but also by memory, narrative, and identity. Stories are the medium through which healing and hope are passed on.”[488] Capturing these stories helps the Church to remain grounded in real human experiences and allows survivors and perpetrators alike to reclaim their dignity through truth-telling. These archives can be integrated into seminary formation, parish education programs, and national reconciliation days, reminding the faithful that God’s mercy has already worked in their midst through the lives of ordinary Rwandans.

[488]Schreiter, 63.

### 5.2.8 Encourage Church Advocacy Against Genocide Ideology

The Catholic Church in Rwanda, with its wide moral influence and national presence, has a critical role to play in dismantling genocide ideology and all forms of divisionism. Although considerable progress has been made in promoting national unity, pockets of ideological resistance, denial, and hate speech still persist in some communities, particularly among youth who did not witness the genocide firsthand. The Church must take a prophetic stand by consistently advocating for truth, justice, memory, and human dignity. This advocacy should be visible in homilies, catechetical materials, pastoral letters, and diocesan campaigns that teach the faithful about the root causes and consequences of the genocide.

Church leaders at all levels must speak clearly and courageously against any rhetoric or behavior that revives ethnic hatred or minimizes the reality of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Parishes and Church institutions, including schools and seminaries, should regularly organize public dialogues, memorial events, and training sessions on peace, citizenship, and responsible memory. Moreover, the Church should collaborate with the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement to promote a culture of critical thinking and national identity that transcends ethnic affiliations.

As theologian Gregory Baum has noted, "Prophetic witness entails naming the evil in our midst and calling people to conversion. Silence in the face of injustice is complicity."[489]The Church in Rwanda cannot afford to be silent where voices of division still speak. By actively confronting genocide ideology, the Church fulfills its mission to be a sign of communion and hope. Its advocacy should not be reactive, but proactive and constant, forming consciences that are vigilant against exclusion, resentment, and distortion of historical truth.

[489] Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation: A Theological Reading of Sociology*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 237.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research set out to explore the possibility and practice of a holistic spirituality of reconciliation and healing among the perpetrators and survivors of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, with specific reference to Butare Diocese. The study was grounded in the theological tradition of the Catholic Church and enriched by pastoral experience and human insights. It has examined how the Scripture, Tradition, Magisterial teachings, and local initiatives can converge into a spirituality capable of healing the profound wounds left by one of the most devastating events of the 20th century. The central question of investigation is: How can the Church foster a reconciliatory spirituality that responds to deep trauma, facilitates healing, and restores broken relationships in post-genocide Rwanda?

The genocide was not only a social political catastrophe, but also a profound moral and spiritual crisis. It tore apart the very fabric of Rwandan society, shattering trust, distorting identity, and leaving behind the unresolved trauma, grief, guilt, and alienation. Many survivors continue to live with the psychological and emotional weight of their losses, while many perpetrators experience shame, exclusion, and a thirst for reintegration. Any credible pastoral response, as this study has argued, must be both deeply theological and attentively human. It must be rooted in the Gospel, informed by Catholic tradition, and responsive to the complex suffering of individuals and communities.

Chapter one has established the local ecclesial and social setting of the research. It has detailed the demographic, historical, and pastoral contours of Butare Diocese, one of the areas most deeply affected by the genocide. The chapter has underscored how the Diocese itself bears the scars of 1994 not only in its people, but also in its institutions, structures, and mission. Yet, it also pointed to the Diocese's vital role in post-genocide healing through liturgy, sacramental life, and community engagement. This chapter has situated the theological investigation within

a real and concrete ecclesial body, making reconciliation not a distant theory but a lived ecclesial necessity.

Chapter two has broadened the reflection by exploring interdisciplinary insights from philosophy, psychology, and the social sciences. Thinkers like Paul Ricoeur and Emmanuel Levinas emphasized memory, forgiveness, and ethical responsibility as key to reconciliation. Psychologists contributed knowledge on trauma, PTSD, post-traumatic growth, and restorative justice. This chapter has revealed that reconciliation is not only a Christian imperative but also a fundamental human process. True healing involves the integration of emotional, psychological, spiritual, and social dimensions of the person. It also requires safe spaces for truth-telling, memory work, and restoration of relationships.

Chapter three has turned to the national and cultural setting. It has examined how Rwanda has addressed reconciliation through government-led programs such as *Gacaca* courts, Unity and Reconciliation Commissions, and commemorative practices. It has also assessed the contributions and limitations of grassroots and Church-based initiatives. The chapter has highlighted both the achievements and gaps, particularly concerning youth involvement, intergenerational trauma, and a continued need for trust-building between victims and perpetrators. It is within this cultural and political landscape that the Church must position itself as a credible agent of healing and moral transformation.

Chapter four has provided the theological foundation of the study. Drawing from the Sacred Scripture, the writings of Church Fathers, and Magisterial documents, it traced the Church's deep tradition of reconciliation as a central part of her mission. The Old and New Testaments present reconciliation as God's initiative to restore humanity through covenants, prophets, and ultimately in Jesus Christ. The Church Fathers, including Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, and Basil the Great, emphasized healing as a spiritual and communal process

within the ecclesial body. Magisterial teachings, including Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* and *Unitatis Redintegratio, Ecclesia in Africa, Africae Munus,* and the Pastoral Letter of the Rwandan Bishops, affirm that the Church must be a reconciled and reconciling community—a place where mercy and truth embrace.

Chapter five has integrated the theological vision with empirical fieldwork. Based on interviews, observations, and pastoral analysis, the chapter presented both the ongoing trauma experienced in the Diocese and the signs of spiritual renewal. Survivors and perpetrators alike testified to the transformative role of sacraments, prayer groups, justice and peace commissions, and small Christian communities. However, challenges remain, including a lack of trained pastoral agents, limited youth participation, and insufficient trauma-informed pastoral strategies. The chapter concluded with eight detailed recommendations aimed at strengthening the Church's capacity to minister reconciliation holistically and sustainably.

From the integration of all these chapters, this dissertation affirms that reconciliation is not a one-time gesture but a pilgrimage of transformation. It is a spiritual and communal journey that demands time, grace, and human cooperation. Healing must be viewed as an ongoing process that touches every part of the human person: body, mind, and spirit. The Church's role is to embody this holistic spirituality through liturgy, formation, community life, and advocacy for justice.

Methodologically, the study contributes a model of incarnational theology, where doctrinal reflection and lived experience meet. By engaging survivors, perpetrators, priests, and religious in Butare, the research grounded theology in the actual wounds and hopes of a post-genocide society. This synergy between theory and praxis affirms that theology must not only speak about reconciliation, but must also be lived as reconciliation.

Looking ahead, the Church in Rwanda, and beyond, must continue to cultivate this mission with fidelity and creativity. Seminary and religious formation must include reconciliation as a core theme. Structures that support mental health, truth-telling, and social reintegration must be strengthened. Future research could explore ecumenical collaborations, the role of women in peacebuilding, and strategies for intergenerational healing.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Research Questionnaire

*Please read each question carefully and follow the instructions given. Then, kindly answer the questions by ticking (√) in the box that best describes your answer or write your answers in the space provided where applicable. The answers provided are for **ACADEMIC PURPOSES** only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.*

## Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Widowed [ ] Other [ ]
4. Role during/after genocide: Survivor [ ] Perpetrator (released) [ ] Relative of victim [ ] Relative of perpetrator [ ] Other (specify) _____
5. Parish / Community: _____
6. Education level: No formal [ ] Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ] Other [ ]

## Section B: Personal Experiences of Trauma and Healing

1. How would you describe your current emotional state regarding the genocide?
    - Still deeply wounded [ ] Somewhat healed [ ] Mostly healed [ ] Fully healed [ ]
2. Have you ever shared your personal story of pain or guilt with others in your community?
    - Yes, openly [ ] Yes, but with difficulty [ ] No [ ]
3. To what extent do you experience trauma symptoms (e.g., nightmares, anger, fear, guilt)?
    - Very frequently [ ] Sometimes [ ] Rarely [ ] Never [ ]
4. Do you believe forgiveness can reduce personal suffering?
    - Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]

## Section C: Attitudes Toward Reconciliation

1. Do you believe reconciliation between survivors and perpetrators is possible?
    - Yes, always [ ] Sometimes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]
2. What are the greatest obstacles to reconciliation in your experience?
    - Pain/trauma [ ] Guilt/shame [ ] Lack of trust [ ] Lack of dialogue [ ] Poverty [ ] Church silence [ ] Other (specify) _____
3. In your opinion, reconciliation requires (select all that apply):
    - Personal forgiveness [ ] Justice [ ] Dialogue [ ] Spiritual healing [ ] Socio-economic support [ ] Church guidance [ ]
4. Do you believe reconciliation is necessary for your own healing?
    - Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]

## Section D: Role of the Church in Healing and Reconciliation

1. How important is the role of the Catholic Church in reconciliation efforts?
    - Very important [ ] Somewhat important [ ] Not important [ ]
2. Which Church activities have helped you most in reconciliation/healing?
    - Sacraments (Confession, Eucharist) [ ] Prayer groups [ ] Justice and Peace Commissions [ ] Retreats/workshops [ ] Pastoral visits [ ] None [ ] Other _____
3. Do you think the Church in Butare Diocese has done enough to address wounds of the genocide?
    - Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ]
4. What more should the Church do to promote reconciliation?
    - Training pastoral agents [ ] Organizing dialogue sessions [ ] Socio-economic support [ ] Youth programs [ ] Advocacy against genocide ideology [ ] Other _____

## Section E: Social and Community Relationships

1. Since the genocide, how would you describe your relationship with neighbors from the other group (survivors/perpetrators)?
    - Very good [ ] Good [ ] Neutral [ ] Tense [ ] Hostile [ ]
2. Do you feel fully accepted in your community today?
    - Yes [ ] Somewhat [ ] No [ ]
3. Have you ever participated in joint community activities (e.g., farming projects, solidarity groups, savings cooperatives) with members of the other group?
    - Yes, regularly [ ] Yes, occasionally [ ] Never [ ]
4. Do you believe that socio-economic cooperation (working together, sharing resources) helps reconciliation?
    - Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
5. What social activities would most help reconciliation in your community?
    - Shared economic projects [ ] Community dialogue [ ] Sports/cultural activities [ ] Mutual support groups [ ] Other _____

## Section F: Spiritual Life and Faith

1. How important is your faith in helping you cope with the wounds of the genocide?
    - Very important [ ] Important [ ] Slightly important [ ] Not important [ ]
2. Which spiritual practices have helped you most in healing?
    - Eucharist [ ] Confession [ ] Personal prayer [ ] Bible reflection [ ] Retreats [ ] Community prayer groups [ ] Other _____
3. Do you believe that forgiveness is a spiritual requirement for reconciliation?
    - Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
4. Do you feel that God has helped you to forgive and heal?
    - Yes, completely [ ] Yes, but still struggling [ ] Not yet [ ] No [ ]
5. What role should the Church's sacraments and liturgy play in reconciliation? (open-ended)

**Interview Questions**

1. **Personal Healing**
    - Can you describe how the events of the 1994 genocide have affected your life, and how you are experiencing healing today?
2. **Reconciliation Experience**
    - What does reconciliation mean to you personally, and have you experienced moments of reconciliation with others in your community?
3. **Role of the Church**
    - How has the Catholic Church, through its sacraments, teachings, or community programs, influenced your journey of reconciliation and healing?
4. **Challenges and Obstacles**
    - What difficulties or obstacles do you see as the greatest barriers to reconciliation between survivors and perpetrators in Butare Diocese?
5. **Hopes for the Future**
    - Looking ahead, what gives you hope for true reconciliation and healing in Rwanda, and what role do you believe the Church should play in this process?

## Appendix II: CUEA Letter Permission to Bind

## Appendix II: Plagiarism Report

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**Appendix III: The Map of Butare Diocese**

