Women and peace building: A contextual approach to the Fourth Gospel and its challenge to women in Post Genocide Rwanda

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Submitted in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

18 June 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references, and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.
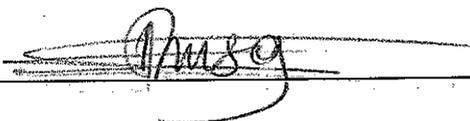
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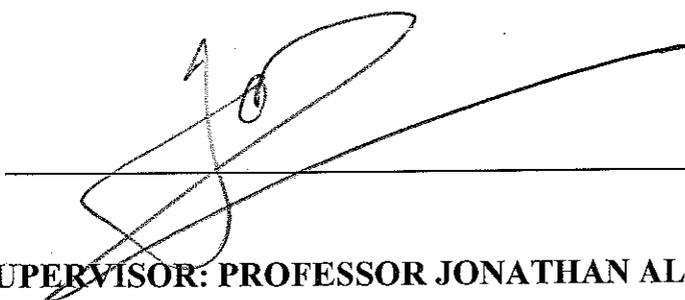
SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR JONATHAN ALFRED DRAPER

DEDICATION

I am indebted to God, who took special care of me by manifesting fatherly responsibility much needed after the early death of my father. He assured and provided me with unfailing love and protection from the very early stages of my life until today. To Him this work is dedicated!

This work is also dedicated to the memory of my beloved late mother, Sarah, who brought meaning to my life. Through her sacrificial love I was brought up in a well-balanced lifestyle. Mom, it is most unfortunate that we were separated by the genocide and I was not even able to attend to your burial ceremony. Rest in peace till we meet again!

Mrs Uzabakiliho Madeleine my spiritual mother, you changed my life by your exemplary Christian faith. You taught me so much and even though God chose to take you so early, I know you would rejoice with me for this achievement. Your encouraging words continue to ring into my ears and I have made it as you wished. The completion of this work revives your memory for me and my family!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This work is a contextual study of five selected biblical texts from the Fourth Gospel: John 2:1-12 and John 19:25-29; John 4:1-42; John 11:1-12:1-11 and John 18:15-17. Its aim is to read the selected texts with a Rwandan woman's eyes, focusing on her peacemaking role and her potential as an agent of reconciliation. It is motivated by the context of the Rwandan situation during and after the catastrophic genocide of 1994.

This work seeks to open the eyes of Rwandan women toward the role of peacemaking and unity-building by using a combined approach to conflict resolution. This approach includes the application of some theories in the domain of sociology, as well as the contextual biblical approach. Thus, it combines the capacity of awareness of conflicts in the community and its pain in the victim, and strives to restore the broken relationship caused by the conflict. The reading of the biblical texts with Rwandan eyes and the dialogue with the texts pointed out that the women used some tools in the gospel for success in the role of peacemaking and peace-building in their communities. The main tools are listed in the data findings of the exegesis. But mainly the transcendence of conflictual myths of origin to with kinship ties was found to be a major tool for breaking the kind of barriers which could lead to genocide.

This research also highlights the failure of women in that domain because of their lack of transcendence of obligations based on regional and kinship ties. They fail to display their *ubumuntu* and their *ubunyampinga*. They rather point fingers at the victims instead of siding with or shielding them. Various suggestions are made for women to play a successful role in bringing about true and lasting peace and reconciliation, pointing out some ways in which Rwandan women can help to restore unity and trust among the population.

CHAPTER 6. DISTANTIATION: THE EXEGETICAL MOVE ON THE SELECTED TEXTS IN JOHN

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

1.0 Introduction

One of the strengths of the Fourth Gospel is the attention it gives to women. Although there are more women in Luke's Gospel, the Gospel according to John contains several well-known stories involving prominent female characters, and most of these pericopes are found only in John. Among their qualities, women in the Gospel of John are instruments of peace, unity and harmony. For instance, Jesus' mother is instrumental in ending a crisis at Cana; the Samaritan woman broke down the boundary wall that separated the Jews and the Samaritans; Mary and Martha displayed a mediating role in the midst of the conflict with the Judeans who were opposing Jesus. In narratives describing conflicts, women generally side boldly with the victim in a non-violent way (for example, the passion narrative). Only in one case is a female character - the woman gatekeeper who challenged Peter in the courtyard of the High Priest - portrayed as acting against the defence of the victim. The peacemaking attitude that characterizes most of the women in the Gospel of John fits well with the image of traditional Rwandan women, an image which is portrayed in Rwandan adages and sayings.

Rwandan women were traditionally viewed as bridge-builders and agents of unity in society. The popular saying, *umukobwa ni nyampinga* (literally, a young lady is a potential source of rescue on the top of the hill) expresses the thought that weary travellers on distant hills[1] or villages could often enjoy warm hospitality in those far places when they found women born in their village who married into families in those far places. The woman would attend to any person from her village as she would to her own relatives, regardless of which family, clan, or tribe they may be from. Because of this, women could stay out of many social conflicts in which their families were involved.

The saying *umukobwa ntagira ubwoko* (a woman does not belong to a definite ethnic tribe) pushes the thought even further. This refers to the girl's destiny to leave her family

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[1] Rwanda is a mountainous country, it is commonly called a country of a "Thousand Hills".

and join her husband's family. Her ethnic group was then to be defined by the family into which she was to be married. This recognized fluid ethnic identity of Rwandan women enabled them to be bridge-builders and agents of unity in the society.

Women could play an important active role in peacemaking in Rwandan culture. A woman could play a peacemaking role between her husband and the neighbours in times of conflict; if there were quarrels between them the wife could stop the husband from fighting by the practice known as *gutambika umweko mu bikingi by' amarembo*. (This means closing the gate with her traditional belt, which the husband could not cross to go out and fight. Instead of breaking this taboo the husband would rather stop and eventually make peace with the opponent). The mother could also exercise great influence on her grown sons no matter how old they might be, by the act of showing them her breast by which they were fed. This was used as a last resort when all attempts to prevent them from being involved in a violent conflict had failed. Any son that ignored the request of his mother in such circumstances was at high risk of being rejected by the society as a whole.

The bottom line of this is that, traditionally, Rwandan women are generally not agents of conflict and they are not involved in the many conflicts that set their male counterparts at odds. They enjoy recognized neutrality and other qualities that enable them to minimize social differences in their communities and play a key role in preventing or solving conflicts. These are the qualities that were expected to be exhibited before and during the war that started in Rwanda in 1990 and culminated in the genocide in 1994. Since the peace-making qualities expected from Rwandan women have some similarities with qualities that characterize the women in the Gospel of John, the current study will examine how the peacemaking attitude of the women of this gospel can be understood from the perspective of the traditional Rwandan culture and how it might challenge contemporary Rwandan women to take up their peace-building role.

1.1 Research questions

Since Rwandan culture provides an atmosphere conducive for women to play an important role in peace-making, peace-building and promoting unity in their community, it was reasonable to count on their contribution in the prevention of the genocide. This tragedy seems to indicate the lack of positive participation in their peacemaking role. The present study will seek to understand the factors resposible for that failure and to examine the resources still available to enable Rwandan women to play a significant role in the restoration of lasting peace and harmony in Rwanda.

In light of the above, questions that motivated the present work include:

- Did Rwandan women play their usual traditional role of peacemaking during the period of the 1994 war which led to the tragedy of the genocide?
- What was the contribution of Rwandan women in peacemaking prior to the war and during the genocide, and what are the factors accountable for their lack of positive participation toward the prevention of that tragedy?
- Does contemporary Rwandan society still provide women with the opportunity of being peacemakers?

Peace and unity are virtues that are part of Christian teaching and are clearly supported in the Bible. Moreover, biblical principles are not limited to encouraging people to seek peace and unity; they also include some teachings and examples about the proper way to pursue these virtues. The Gospel of John has recorded interesting examples showing how women can contribute to the restoration of unity in society. The current research intends to initiate a reading of the Gospel of John in a way that challenges Rwandan women from the perspective of traditional Rwandan culture, by means of the peacemaking role of women described in the Fourth Gospel. The research aims to find out what cultural and biblical resources are available to enable Rwandan women to play a decisive role in building peace and national unity. This objective will be facilitated in the attempt to answer the following questions:

- How did women in the Mediterranean region during the first century participate in the development of their nation?
- What attitudes characterize women in the Gospel of John that are oriented toward promoting peace, unity and reconciliation in their community? How do these attitudes compare to those expected from traditional Rwandan women?
- How could women in the Gospel of John challenge and inspire Rwandan women in their expected role of peacemaking, peace building and promotion of unity and reconciliation, in contemporary Rwandan society?

It is anticipated that the dialogue between these women will result in a number of answers relevant to the above questions. The next section provides the main methodological steps, which will guide this research work.

1.2 Research theoretical framework and methodology

The present research is theoretical and is based on secondary data. The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model and Inculturation Hermeneutics have been chosen to provide the theoretical framework of this study and also determine its methodological approach. Although the present work is shaped by the Tri-Polar Model with the incorporation of Inculturation Hermeneutics which especially help to study the context, it includes to some extent some aspects of feminist views in the reflections of the core chapters.[2] In the contextualization phase focusing on the analysis of the Rwandan context, the study will draw from Inculturation approaches, while the analysis of the texts in the distantiation phase will use the literary methodology of narrative criticism.

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[2] Because of the focus and scope of this thesis, it does not intend explore the feminist view directly, as set out for instance in African feminist biblical hermeneutics. However, it agrees with its objectives as some of them will be reflected as it unfolds. I am aware that there is extensive work of this nature, produced by some Africana feminist biblical scholars such as Kanyoro (1986a, b; 2001 a, b; 2002) Njoroge (2000; 2000); Musa Dube (2005; 2002; 2000); Nadar (2000; 2002; 2006), Oduyoye (1995, 1986; 2001) Okure 1988;1993;1995 and many others. My recognition of the need to interact with feminist hermeneutics will be one of my recommendatioins for future research (see below 262-4). However, at this stage of my research, I have tried to limit myself to the existing field of peacemaking studies.

1.2 Research design

Research that engages the Rwandan context of conflict requires interaction with scholars in the domain of conflict resolution to enable an understanding of both conflict and reconciliation in the society. Further, a review of literature on contemporary theories of conflict resolution will be helpful for the purpose of identifying an approach to conflict resolution that is suitable to adopt for this work. From there, the thesis will continue with a study of the Rwandan context.

1.4 The analysis of the Rwandan context

The Rwandan context will be analyzed first so as to provide the context in which the selected biblical texts will be studied. This analysis will be done following the five levels suggested by Ukpong[3] (1995a), summarized as follows: These are: phenomenological analysis, socio-anthropological analysis, historical analysis, social analysis, and the religious dimension.

1.5 The study of the texts

The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model adopted to guide this study influences its shape. This research work is a contextual study that intends to read some selected passages from the view point of a given context. Since the Rwandan context is the subject of interpretation, it is described first. This corresponds to the 'Contextualization" pole in the Tri-Polar exegetical model. In this contextualization stage, the focus is on Rwandan women's contribution in building peace and unity both culturally and beyond the bounds of the culture. Following an examination of the Rwandan context, the study discusses the context of the Gospel, especially its socio-historical and cultural background and the way this context affected or conditioned the attitude of women with respect to peacemaking. This prepares for the discussion between the characters from the Fourth Gospel in the first century Mediterranean context and the Rwandan contemporary context.

The discussion on the plight of women and their historical condition in the context of the Mediterranean region of the first century will be followed by an analysis of the biblical

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[3] Details about this procedure are provided in the theoretical framework under Inculturation Hermeneutics.

texts. The passages selected include the following: John 2:1-11, together with 19:25-27; John 4:4-42; John 11:1 - 12:1-11 and John 18:15-17. The selected texts are read against the background of the women in Rwanda, that is, from their worldview, culture and life experience. This is similar to what Ukpong (1995a:3) called "reading the Bible with African eyes", and also conforms to the suggestions of West (1993) that the Bible is to be read against a specific concrete human situation. In other words, the text will be read with Rwandan eyes. This stage is designed to prepare for the conversation between the context of the texts and the context of interpreter (the Rwandan context) which will occur during the appropriation stage as described in the theoretical framework.

Each text will be analyzed separately in order to be understood in its own immediate context. The exegesis of each passage will seek to understand the message conveyed through each female character portrayed in the narrative with respect to building unity, peace and harmony in her society. The analysis will also take into consideration the attitudes of women in the texts towards human divisions caused by blood ties or regional barriers. This study of the biblical text corresponds to the distantiation phase described in the section on methodology.

The approach adopted for the analysis of these texts will be narrative criticism. The goal of narrative criticism is to allow the text to communicate its meaning to the reader by involving him/her in the world of the text and helping him/her understand it more clearly in his/her own world (Iser 1974:vi). Since the focus is on selected biblical texts, the basic approach to the texts will be literary. Elisabeth Malbon provides us with some literary questions that will assist in reaching the above objectives. The suggested questions are: What does the text mean? How do various literary patterns enable the text to communicate meaning to its hearers and readers? This study will follow what Malbon has designated as five "W"s that describe the elements of narrative: who (characters), where and when (settings), and what and why (plot) (Malbon 2000:17).

Following Malbon's suggestion that "Narrative analysis of characters is intertwined with narrative analysis of plot" (Malbon 2000:9), characters and plot will be analyzed in this

work as well. The characters are the ones carrying out actions in narratives. Malbon describes characters as being known either by what they say and do or by what other characters say to or about them and by what they do in relation to or because of them. This is applicable to our pericopes, especially as this study seeks to examine the attitude of a particular character in each passage. Special consideration will be given to characters such as the Mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, Mary and Martha and the woman gatekeeper.

Ashton believes that there is no meaning until there is communication (Ashton 1994:190). The fact is that communication involves dialogue between two or more people. Thus, the readers/hearers must be in active communication with the text, allowing it to speak to them. They must also be in a position to ask questions of the text, to agree or disagree with it. Gadamer affirms that, "Conversation is a circle closed by the dialectic of question and answers" (Gadamer 1975:389). This dialogue will be undertaken in the phase of appropriation according to the Tri-Polar Model. It is during this phase that there will be interaction between Rwandan issues of conflict and those pointed out in the exegesis of the texts. At this stage, the interpretation will bring together the horizon[4] of the text and its community and the Rwandan horizon, mediating a new consciousness which leads to a new praxis (Draper 2001:158). This is expected to be the culmination of the interpretive process where the texts are appropriated in the light of the context of the Rwandan traditional and contemporary context. It is expected that the result of this appropriation will challenge Rwandan women with respect to their expected role in building peace, unity and harmony in their contemporary situation.

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[4] The term "horizon" refers to various meanings, as Gadamer (1975: 269-274) presents in his book *Truth and Method*; for instance it can refer to the concept of a situation. Gadamer says the horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. Examples are given when referring to the thinking of the mind, i.e. for instance speaking about the narrowness, or expansion of horizon; the opening up of a new horizon; having a horizon which means not being limited to what is nearest but to be able to see beyond it. In terms of conversation, which falls into the idea expressed in the present research work, Gadamer says that when we have discovered the stand point and horizon of the other person, his/her ideas become intelligible. In hermeneutical terms, he explains that the hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us. They constitute then, the horizon of a particular past; but he clarifies that there is no fixed set of opinions and evaluations which determine and limit the horizon of the present. It (horizon) is rather continually formed as we continually test our prejudices by the encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we come. That understanding does not result in the formation of a more isolated horizon but rather, in a fusion of horizons.

The concluding sections will provide an overall summary of findings based on data found in the previous chapters. It is during this phase that the research will be reviewed, with an evaluation of the extent to which the thesis has achieved its objectives.

1.6 Limitations

After the genocide, controversies and polemics about events that marked Rwandan history abound, so that people often tend to be more apologetic than objective in presenting their version of the events. The matter became so serious that the government decided to temporarily suspend the teaching of Rwandan history in schools until necessary corrections are done on the way it is written. Moreover, most of literature written after the genocide is the work of expatriates who had a limited understanding of the Rwandan situation and relied much on informants whose objectivity is not always guaranteed. This situation complicates the task of gathering data related to the Rwandan socio-cultural context and to the event of the genocide.

Another limitation, which is not the least, resides in the fact that Rwandan women do not produce much material written by themselves. Thus, the material available that informs a great deal of research may be more about what is said about women than what women say. To minimize the impact of these problems on this study, I have endeavoured to obtain and focus on material written by Rwandans even though material from other scholars is also used. Where there are differing views, they are presented and confronted. Reports written by different groups and associations as well as some human rights agencies are of great help. This complements my personal observations as a Rwandan woman and enables me to produce a balanced analysis of the Rwandan context.

Moreover, this thesis intends as far as possible to avoid entering the controversies based on ethnicity or other divisive issues in its aims to examine how Rwandan women, regardless of their social label, can renew their role of being peacemakers and peace-builders in order to build true reconciliation. I believe therefore that limitations related to

biased information because of the sensitive nature of the Rwandan conflict do not affect the ability of this thesis to reach its objectives.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction to the work. It provides the background, the motivation of the research, the main question that prompted it, the overall design, the limitations and the structure of the research.

The second chapter provides the methodological framework and description of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model that guides the research. The method is evaluated in terms of its strengths and its limitations. The chapter continues by discussing the applicability of the method to the present study.

The third chapter deals with theories of reconciliation. The thesis aims to examine the role of Rwandan women in reconciliation and peacemaking. This chapter is therefore concerned with a review of the literature on theories of reconciliation, with the aim of identifying a fitting approach to conflict resolution which may be an effective guide for this work.

The fourth chapter presents a socio-cultural and historical overview of the Rwandan context. It provides an outline of some events that marked Rwandan history, especially those related to ethnic relations. The historical background of the place and role of women is presented with a particular focus on their plight and condition, as well as their contribution to Rwandan development, and peacemaking and peace-building in their communities.

Chapter five provides the context of the Gospel of John. It aims to present the social and political background of the context of the Fourth Gospel so as to gain an understanding of its message from its own context. This is necessary because this gospel was written from a setting which was different from the context of those who are interpreting it today. It means that there is a need to look into the socio-cultural background of the first century

Mediterranean world but with emphasis on the plight and cultural role of women during that time both in the society and in the early Church.

Chapter six is based on the exegesis of selected biblical texts in the Fourth Gospel. This chapter aims to analyze the selected texts which speak about the role of women in peacemaking and breaking walls of divisions among people in the gospel. The chapter comprises five sections corresponding to the five passages selected from the Gospel. Each text will be dealt with separately**.** The passages selected are those concerning the stories of Jesus' mother (John 2:1-11) together with John 19:25-27, the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-42), the Bethany sisters (John 11:1-44) and the servant girl (doorkeeper) (18: 17-18)**.** An exegesis of the texts will be provided, applying the method as presented before. The distantiation phase of the Tri-polar Method will be used as the tool to reconstruct the meaning of the text in its own context as far as that can be done using narrative methodology. The contextual approach guiding the interpretation will require the identification of elements from the texts that specifically deal with the peacemaking and unity building role of women from the context of the gospel.

Chapter seven concerns the appropriation of the message received from the selected texts. This chapter examines the interaction between the message from the biblical text and the Rwandan situation that calls for peace building and fostering unity. It shows how the reading of the texts "with Rwandan eyes" sheds light on the message to be assimilated by Rwandan women in their own setting. This message is centred on their roles and place in the society, especially with respect to their contribution in building peace and national unity.

The last chapter is the general conclusion. It provides the summary of the main chapters and presents the evaluation of the appropriation, indicating to what extent the objectives of the thesis have been reached. It also contains suggestions about the use of the insights gained from this research. The chapter ends by suggesting some areas of further research

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The present research is based on a study of selected texts from the Gospel of John, focusing on their relevance to the context of Rwanda. The study seeks to hear from the selected texts as they speak about women's role in reconciliation and peacemaking in their contexts. The Fourth Gospel speaks from circumstances that are very different in terms of time, socio-political life situation and so on, from the Rwandan setting. Indeed, it may not always be possible to reconstruct the original context of the text. However, the purpose of this attempted reconstruction of the context of these texts is to address the real lives of the Rwandan women from the vantage point of a very different worldview. This explains the importance of approaching the selected biblical texts by means of contextual exegesis.[5]

The contextual approach adopted for the analysis of the biblical texts will follow the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model into which some aspects of inculturation hermeneutics will be incorporated. This chapter aims to shed more light on the model, surveying its genesis and development from the early stage as the product of Christina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, to its later stage of reformulation by Jonathan Draper. The description of the theory and its aim is followed by an evaluation of its values and limitations, especially in its applicability to this study.

This chapter will also provide an overview of the inculturation hermeneutical approach and its emphasis on the context of the interpreter. This is due to the fact that the selected biblical texts from the Fourth Gospel which are the focus of this research work will be read against the specific concrete Rwandan life situation. The Rwandan context used as the subject of interpretation will be analyzed following the inculturation hermeneutical

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[5] The study will use a number of books which deal with the Contextual approach, Inculturation Hermeneutic approach as well as the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model which provides the framework of this work. Hence, we will interact wih various authors such as Grenholm and Patte (2000), Draper 2000;2001;20002; West (1993; 1998; 1999; 2009);Ukpong (1995 a;1995b; 1999; Gadamer (1975) and many others who contributed to the approach adoped by this research work.

approach developed by Ukpong (1995a:3-14). However, the whole study will be guided by the framework provided by the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model. The background and development of this interpretive approach is described below.

2.1 Background of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model

The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, initially known as *Scriptural Criticism,* was first formulated by Christina Grenholm, a systematic theologian, and Daniel Patte, a biblical scholar. The two scholars developed the method in a collective work that they co-edited, as Patte mentions in the preface of one of his books:

> Cristina Grenholm and I conceptualized scriptural criticism as a critical approach that strives to make explicit the contextual, hermeneutical, and analytical frames of biblical interpretations, when writing the methodological overture for the series 'Romans through History and Culture' found in *Reading Israel in Romans: Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations* (Grenholm and Patte 2000: xvii)

However, the above collective work is not the initial field of invention of the model for the two scholars. Patte affirms that each of them had a partial model developed in their early works. For instance, Patte had tried to apply the model in its early stage in his work published in 1995, *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation.* In this work, Patte was concerned about the relationship between the believers' faith interpretation and the scholars' analytical interpretation. Grenholm, in her work, *Romans Interpreted*: *A Comparative Analysis of the Commentarie*, published in 1990, had developed a "sophisticated" model that focused on the complementary character of theologians' and biblical scholars' approaches whereby her feminist concerns serve as a rope to tie the two together (Patte 1999:xviii). The two scholars then worked together in the above collective work, complementing each other in the development of the Scriptural Criticism approach.

2.1.1 The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model by Grenholm and Patte

Samba (2002:11) has observed that people in his country, Congo-Brazzaville, exhibit a variety of talents. In music, for instance, they can play guitars and other kinds of instruments intuitively and spontaneously without written music. The observation

similarly applies to many people throughout Africa, specifically to the Rwandans, who have various innovations such as cultural dances, traditional songs, poems and even handworks such as pottery and traditional crafts. Some of their inventions serve as effective traditional cures against a number of diseases. Many of those inventions served the community in their traditional forms, even before they were "developed".[6] Without being subjected to any Western modernization, these inventions could be quite useful in their communities. However some of these African inventions have now been subjected to Western development or "civilization", through research and educational analysis, which has rendered them even more useful and beneficial to their communities. The above observation may lead us to an understanding of the genesis or development of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, since African people had a capacity to hear and interpret texts within their own oral culture long before the innovation of Western views and tools of interpretation. My use of the model is intended to feed the insights of the "untrained readers" into the work of "trained readers" such as myself (cf. West 1998).

While the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model is known as an interpretive approach produced by Grenholm and Patte, these scholars admit that the approach is not their original product. It is rather a process of interpretation that originated with Christian believers, such as pastors and priests, "who strive for their responsibility when discerning and formulating the teaching of the Scripture for believers today" (Grenholm and Patte 2000:6).[7] But, though the above two co-authors are quite aware that they are not the initiators of the method, they still affirm their role in its formulation and development, in the formulation of the interpretive process with the focus on the reading of a text as Scripture; that is, inviting the believers to read the text on the basis of their faith and religious experience. They refer to this exercise as critical biblical studies (Grenholm and Patte 2000:3; Patte 1999:211). Grenholm and Patte's role included the elaboration of three major moments of

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[6] Some people use the term "development" in connection with Western views of primitive Africa. However my view is different in this work; ideas about the development of African creativities is related to their exodus from the first initiators to the present and even to their future status as they continue to be subjected to new transformations by new generations.
[7] Grenholm and Patte (2000:33) cite Farley, "The aim of theological studies is to discipline, or organize, the basic modes of interpretation that already exist in the situation of faith" (Farley 1988:71).

the interpretive process, which was and still is practiced by conscientious pastors and priests as they prepare sermons:

> Is it not scriptural criticism what they (preachers) do each week when they prepare their sermons? Indeed! In order to preach about a text, they strive to integrate three interpretive moments…the best preachers bring these interpretive moments together in a creative tension, because they know that without this tension their preaching is neither faithful nor responsible (Patte 1999:xvi).

The elaboration of the three interwoven moments in the process of interpretation led to the identification of the model as a Tri-Polar interpretive process.

Grenholm and Patte observe the difference between a tripolar reading of a scriptural text - embodying three poles - and the other readings which they identify as unipolar and bipolar readings of scriptural texts. They point out some weaknesses of such unipolar and bipolar scriptural readings. They argue that the unipolar reading stresses the text as the only thing that is interpreted. Though the two scholars agree that rigorous analytical study of the text is important, their concern about such an approach is that "reducing the interpretive practice simply to an analytical study of the text is academically irresponsible" (Grenholm and Patte 2000:20-21). As for the bipolar reading, Grenholm and Patte observe that throughout the history of scholarship, the interpretive process has been understood as bipolar - including two poles - namely the analytical study of the text and the hermeneutical implications for the perception of life. Grenholm and Patte do not dismiss the bipolar reading; they believe that this bipolar analytical/hermeneutical practice is to be preserved as part the tripolar practice. Their position is clarified in their statement: "We will not argue against a bipolar analytical/hermeneutical or critical/theological interpretive practice. On the contrary we affirm it as an integral part of the responsible interpretive practice" (Grenholm and Patte 2000:21). However, these scholars express their concern that in too many cases the bipolarity of this practice is betrayed. Theoretically the bipolar practice deals with two poles but in practice it emphasizes only one, which, most of the time, is the scriptural text. They contend therefore that the tripolar interpretive practice stands as a solution for the problems inherent in the above unipolar and bipolar scriptural interpretive practices.

The tripolar readings interrelate three poles: the text, the believer's life, and religious perceptions of life. As it was said above, the three poles are present in the scriptural reading by individual believers and preachers during the preparation of sermons. More precisely, the three poles involve a moment of a close reading and analysis of the biblical text which helps the preacher to go beyond a casual reading of the text. During this reading some biblical tools such as relevant commentaries, monographs, New Testament Greek and or the Hebrew Bible are used. The second phase is a contextual-pragmatic interpretive moment, in which the text is used to address the actual needs of the daily lives of the audience. The last phase is the hermeneutical interpretive moment whereby the preacher/interpreter conceptualizes the teaching of the text. During this phase, the preacher/interpreter identifies theological categories from the text (Grenholm and Patte 2000:14).

It was the process involving the above three interwoven moments or poles that Grenholm and Patte identified as the *Tri-Polar Interpretive Process*. These poles are considered as three discrete entities whereby each of them is defined through its interaction with the others. Grenholm and Patte in fact admit that their role was to clarify these poles, which may be described also as hermeneutical, contextual and analytical frames. Grenholm and Patte, as well as Draper, believe that these processes are of "equal weight" (Draper 2002:16). Thus, when carrying out an interpretation of a biblical text, one can start with any of them, there is no fixed order. Below is the description of the three poles, beginning with the focus on the text.

2.1.1.1 A Scriptural text

According to Grenholm and Patte, the term "scriptural text" refers to a text which is in a special relationship with the life of the readers/believers and their religious perceptions. The two scholars are specific in identifying the scriptural reading: it is a reading of a text that is precisely taken from the books of the Bible. It might be a single phrase, a few verses, a whole passage or even an entire biblical book or a biblical theme. The interpretation of that text is closely related to both the believers/readers' and/or preacher's view of Scripture as a sacred and revelatory authoritative word of God, and

the specific context of their lives which they believe the text will challenge. The time of reading is considered as a holy time when the readers encounter God, hear God's word and are transformed by it.

The revelatory feature of the text explains the plurality of its meaning as Scripture. Hence, its role, or the various ways in which it affects believers in their particular contexts, defines the way the believers receive teachings for life in a specific context. This agrees with Draper's suggestion that no biblical text has an absolute or neutral meaning applicable from age to age in the same way (Draper 2002). This is similar to Howard-Brook's view that "each reader or community of readers comes to the Bible with a panoply of prejudices and commitments that necessarily play a powerful part in shaping how one hears the word of God speaking" (Howard-Brook 1994:3). Howard-Brook affirms that the meaning of a biblical text is defined by the circumstances, questions or problems that the reader/interpreter brings to the text. In other words, the meaning of a biblical text varies according to the interpreter-believer's context, as they seek to construct the revelation and authority of the text in a way that challenges their life situation (Howard-Brook 1994:3). Grenholm and Patte support the idea with this statement: "The life situation of the text as an interpretative pole varies with the concrete issues of life on the relational web of actual life-situations in the original context and those of the believer's context" (Grenholm and Patte 2000:8).

The contextual nature of the reader's contribution makes it vital that the contribution of the text is also safeguarded. Hence, the reading of the scriptural text involves a reading that is described as the analytical stage. This means that the preacher/interpreter strives to read the scriptural text in its original language; s/he reads the text in its Hebrew or Greek form; s/he makes use of the valuable critical literatures and commentaries, and all this effort aims at seeking to receive the revelatory meaning of the divine text then and now. S/he analyzes the text attempting to minimize the panoply of prejudices that s/he brought to the scriptural text; s/he then allows it to express its quality of divine revelation.[8]

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[8] Grenholm and Patte believe that the Holy Scripture represents the aesthetic interaction between scriptural text and the believers' heteronomous religious experience, and this aesthetic might strongly emphasize the

Hence, by allowing the text to express its meaning, the Scripture is prompted to offer the reader-believer a language to express his/her encounter with God in his/ her life situation.

2.1.1.2 The believer's life

The second phase is the believer's life, or the life-context of a believer. This phase consists of a careful analysis of the life situation of believers, how the message from the scriptural text makes an impact on their particular context, leading them to make a decision for their life, according to the teaching that they received from the text. Grenholm and Patte (2000:37) consider the phase of the believer's life as a contextual frame which bridges the gap between text and life by taking into account the specific situation of the reading process. This is therefore a moment that focuses on a critical analysis of the life situation of the believer. Actually, the two co-authors affirm that the life context of the reader/interpreter makes a strong impact on his/her ways of scriptural reading. The reading addresses a person's life from the perspective of various aspects of their life context, such as social, political, economic, cultural and historical factors. The reader/believer receives a message from a given scriptural reading according to the way the text challenges his or her specific life situation.

Grenholm and Patte provide an illustration of what they mean through a comparison of three different interpretations of the same biblical passage, Genesis 16 and 21 (Grenholm and Patte 2000: 20-30).[9] The first interpretation is that of Von Rad, a supposed neutral

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scriptural text as revelatory so much so that the believers' heteronomous experience of the divine presence is centred on the text as a sacrament (Grenholm 2000:16 quoting Schneiders 1991:40-43).

[9]Grenholm and Patte in *Reading Israel in Romans* (2000:p.28-30) make us observe how a pole of life situation or more precisely a contextual-pragmatic mode of interpretation that focuses on the believer's life situation can make a visible impact on the way a scriptural text is interpreted. They present a case of interpretation with more concern on the life context of women by three scholars, the mainstream critical scholar Gerhard Von Rad and the two feminist scholars Jon Levenson and Phyllis Trible. These three scholars read and interpret the same text, Genesis 16 and 21, but their interpretation is different: Von Rad and Levenson read the narrative from the perspective of the promise given to Abraham and Sarah. Von Rad is said to not show much sensibility about the tragic fate of the slave woman, Hagar, who was sent by her mistress into the desert to die and was told by God to go back to her mistress. Levenson who is more aware of Hagar's situation understands God's command as shocking. To him the command illustrates that God cannot side with the oppressed. Trible considers Hagar as someone with whom all sorts of rejected women can identify themselves. Although this is not a place of recording all the details about the critical work of these scholars or to pass judgment on it, the main focus pointed out is the way the interpretation is done when the contextual perspective of the reader in her/his life situation is taken into account; there is no neutral point of view in interpretation.

and critical scholar. He disregards the vulnerability of Hagar, the slave Egyptian woman, though it is the central theme of the text according to Grenholm and Patte. When reading the narrative, Von Rad focuses on the promise given to Abraham and Sarah, and does not show much sensitivity to the situation of Hagar, the slave woman who was mistreated by her mistress and then was sent by God to return to the same mistress. By reading the text from a perspective that sides with Abraham's God, a perspective that does not side with the oppressed, Grenholm argues that Von Rad missed an important feature of the text. because of his reading from the perspective side with Abraham's God.

The other two scholars' interpretations, however, reveal that a text which is read from the perspective of a different life situation can facilitate a shift in the interpretation of the text. According to Grenholm and Patte's observation, Levenson shows more awareness of Hagar. He pays a great deal of attention to Hagar's story and understands the angel's command that she goes back to her mistress as a shocking indication that God does not side with the oppressed. Instead of giving a charter of freedom to the runaway bondswoman, God just gave her an order to return to the mistress of her oppression. Though Levenson reflects on Hagar's situation, his interpretation differs from Trible's. Trible emphasises the promise given to Hagar to give birth to a son, the first born of a new people. But in Trible's view, Hagar received a promise which was never fulfilled. Moreover, Hagar never experienced any other consolation apart from Ishmael's marriage to a non-Israelite woman. Consequently in Trible's view, Hagar reflects the image of all sorts of rejected women (Grenholm and Patte 2000:28-9).

Grenholm and Patte observe that when the contextual perspective of the reader in her/his life situation is taken into account, the message of the scriptural reading cannot be looked upon from a supposed neutral point of view of the reader/interpreter. Indeed, the above interpretations of the same biblical text reveal how the panoply of prejudices that the reader/believer has acquired from his/her life-context influences the way s/he understands the biblical text, as well as the way their religious perceptions of life affect the interpretation. This leads us to the analysis of the last pole of the Tri-Polar Interpretive Model.

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2.1.1.3 Believers' religious perception of life

Grenholm and Patte believe that the pole called the religious perception of life "is an interpretive moment that accounts for the perceptions of life arising of heteronymous experiences" (Grenholm and Patte 2000:14). The two co-authors argue that this pole is a result of a particular religious experience through which believers envision their relationship to the life-situations in which they find themselves (Grenholm and Patte 2000:47). Grenholm and Patte clarify that the term does not refer to the entire religious perception of life, but to the broader or narrower features that are pertinent to the interpretive process of the biblical text. Actually, this may refer to theological issues involved in the religious perception of the interpreter/reader's life towards the scriptural text. The phase is specifically defined as a hermeneutical interpretive process that accounts for the perceptions of life arising from experiences of the daily life of a believer. It is at this level of the interpretation stage that the interpreter/reader conceptualizes the message of the scriptural text provided by the two preceding poles, that is, the message learned from the scriptural reading, which is done from the perspective of the life-situation of the reader/interpreter. The reader/interpreter conceptualizes the message according to the theological categories that shaped his/her understanding of that message. It is during this process of interpretation that "revelation is constructed" which is more than just a conceptual truth in its verbal form. This moment focuses on creating space between the believer's religious experiences of the events of his/her daily life such as sufferings, joyous occasions or success and so on, and the divine presence through the scriptural text. Grenholm and Patte believe that it is from this perspective that believers experience an encounter with God, hear God's word and consequently acquire the religious dimension which will make an impact on their particular life-situations, because their decision making is enhanced by the personal interaction with the biblical text (Grenholm and Patte 2000:34). As mentioned previously, Grenholm and Patte played a very important role in the development of this method of Scriptural interpretation by elaborating on its process and shaping it into a scholarly method.[10]

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[10] From my observation, few scholars have written about the Tripolar Exegetical Model by Grenholm and Patte. As it will be developed in the following section, Draper has presented some of the weaknesses of the method and elaborated his method based on what was provided by the two scholars. Samba (2002) did not provide much analysis of either strengths or weaknesses of the model but included it in his work.

2.1.2 The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model by Draper

Having critically studied the Scriptural Criticism approach produced by Grenholm and Patte, Draper endorsed this interpretive model and added his own contribution. He called his reformulation of the model "The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model" or simply, "Contextual Exegesis" (Draper 2001:148-168).

Draper highly appreciated the role of Grenholm and Patte in their reformulation of a simple interpretive process into the dynamic Scriptural criticism interpretive process. However, Draper was not fully satisfied with the process. Insights derived from reading the Bible against the background of the struggle of his home country South Africa during the Apartheid era, motivated him to emphasize the context of the reader and her/his reading community. He dismissed alleged neutrality of biblical readings, saying:

> It seems important, therefore, to hold on to the key insight we derive from the struggle in South Africa, namely that the interpretation of the Bible and the theology we formulate are fundamentally determined by our social, economic and political context as readers. There are no neutral readings. Our context prompts us in the questions we bring to the text and decides what counts as answers. The context in question is not simply our faith context, but also our cultural, socio-economic and our class interests (Draper 2001: 156-7).

In addition, Draper, writing out of the experience of the abuse of theology in apartheid South Africa, was not satisfied with "theology" as the final outcome of the reading process, insisting that it should issue in "praxis" a change in the believer's way of being and doing in their context. Draper directed his focus toward contextual exegesis by means of the tri-polar reading of the biblical text. Making the exegesis the main focus in describing the whole process, he explains the word *exegesis* as referring to reading meaning out of the text, as opposed to the *eisegesis*, which refers to reading meaning into the text (Draper 2001:156-7). This introduces an important difference between trained readers and ordinary readers in their approach to the same text.

Gerald West suggests that "trained readers are able to read the Bible critically because they have been trained to use a variety of critical tools and skills" (West 1993:23).

Critical reading is especially important when its clear and specific purpose is to understand the meaning of the Bible in a particular setting or context. In certain contexts, critical reading "must be done because the Bible and its interpretations have often been used both to oppress ordinary people and to legitimate oppression of people" (West 1993:18-19). The apartheid ideology in South Africa provides a good example of that idea.

Trained readers therefore, are equipped with appropriate skills and 'critical tools' to accomplish the crucial task of critical reading. Each of the tools is applied to a particular purpose, such as the reconstruction of the historical period of the biblical text, its sociological setting, the type of the text, and so on, revealing how a biblical text is a product of a particular community or society (West 1993:26).[11] The end goal of the trained reader in using these tools then, is to reconstruct the text that is the product of a particular society in a particular period of time. Also, the reconstruction of the text plays a major role especially in helping the trained reader when s/he interacts with the text in the light of its historical and sociological settings and to support what the text appears to say. The trained readers, then, go further in their readings to appropriately relate the text to their own contexts. Obviously, while West presents the modes of readings the Bible by the trained readers, he does not underestimate the contribution of ordinary readers, a term referring to those who have had no formal training in biblical studies, and who therefore practice what he has called pre-critical reading of the Bible. He rather affirms that ordinary readers have an important contribution to make in the church and community, as well as something to offer in a contextual reading, even to the trained readers.

West's perspective on trained readers agrees with Draper's conviction that exegesis in interpretation is a work of an expert, in other words, of a trained reader. Hence, both Draper and West believe that a person who has been trained and has received the skills to approach the biblical text critically becomes aware of a range of critical skills and concepts which are useful in reading the Bible as well as our context. And so, by insisting

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[11] West provides names of several scholars, such as Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, whose methodologies affirm that the biblical text is the product of a particular society and reflects that society or sector of society.

on the term exegesis as a description of the whole process of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, Draper stresses the importance of critical studies/readings as a counter-balance to possible domination of the process by the context of the reader over the context of the original voice o the text (Draper 2001:154-5; 2002:12).

Continuing with his reformulation of the model, Draper draws our attention to the importance of understanding the context by bringing in the act of communication. He notes that for someone to understand a spoken statement, they should make sure they understand what is going on; otherwise they are likely to systematically misunderstand the whole issue. He clarifies his observation by using Halliday's[12] three factors of communication that facilitate understanding of the surrounding circumstances. These are: knowing the event and where it is taking place (field), the people who are communicating (tenor), and their method of communication, for example, speech, song, letter and so on (mode). In other words, one needs to know the context of what is being said. This includes cultural, social or other relevant issues such as whether the occasion is that of joy, suffering, tragedy, pain, oppression/marginalization, poverty and so on. In the same way, when dealing with the biblical text, the readers/interpreter must be aware of the context of the text they are handling. The biblical text was written to a particular community of faith in a different time and social setting. If the reader/interpreter does not take the context of the text into consideration they may risk misunderstanding its message in their own context (Draper 2001:151).

In addition to his emphasis on the context of both the text and the reader/reading community/interpreter, Draper underscores the impact that the message from the text has on the reader/reading community. He then continues with a third pole of the interpretive process which is the appropriation. To him, the whole interpretive process points to the meaning of the text as a sacred text for the faith of community in its own context, and this goal is reached only after all the three interwoven interpretive moments/poles have been

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[12] Halliday's three factors that determine the register of communication are quoted by Draper; these include a) the field of communication which involves what is going on andet where it is happening; b) the tenor which refers to the agent of communication, in other words, who are the who are people communicating, and c) the method of communication, that is, is it by speech, song, letter and son on (Draper 2001: 151).

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fully explored. Draper calls the pole distantiation, contextualization and appropriation. Below follows an elaboration on those stages starting from the distantiation pole.

2.1.2.1 Distantiation

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the term contains the word distance, which can be referred to as a noun or a verb. As a cognate verb it is defined as becoming less involved or connected with somebody or with something. As a noun, the term refers to the amount of space between two places or things - that is, being far away in space or time (Wehmeir 2000:338) or the fact or condition of being apart or off in space (Simpson 1989:850).

Using the term distantiation in his interpretive process of a sacred text, Draper refers to the idea of being apart in space, expressed in the amount of space between the reader/reading community and the text. Like the dictionary's definition above, Draper evokes the idea of being far away from each other in terms of space or time. He explains the distantiation process in interpreting a text to mean putting enough space between the text and the interpreter, and letting the text be detached from the reader/interpreter. He believes that it is vital that the exegete gains a critical distance from the text, to suspend what s/he previously understood the text to mean, and so, to open her/himself up to new understandings which may contradict her/his pre-suppositions (Draper 2002:12-24; 2001:155-6).

This relates to the need for a critical reading of the text as seen above, especially when we bear in mind that "the interpretation implies that the biblical text does not possess a single, definitive meaning for all time, inconvertible and fixed" (Lee 2002:5). The same text may have a different meaning depending on who is studying it. Thus, Draper might be right when he focuses on the exegesis of a text in terms of its own context, in an attempt to retrieve the most appropriate meaning before applying it to the reader/interpreter's context.

During the distantiation phase, the reader/interpreter strives to allow the text speak for itself in its own context, and to address its particular problems and needs. This process requires the reader to stay far away from the text in order to hear what exactly it meant for its original audience before it can also address the reader/interpreter's life situation. The distantiation is therefore viewed as a moment whereby the reader/hearer seeks to listen rather than to talk. This is a moment wherein various tools are used to allow the text to be itself in its origin and social location, with the goal of reconstructing it in its original context; it is during this phase that the role of the trained reader is exhibited (Draper 2001:156).

The emphasis on exegesis from this view is in line with West's work that stresses the importance of a critical reading of the Bible. The approach attempts to minimize manipulation of the Bible by allowing the Bible to speak from its own context (West 1993:20). The distantiation pole is therefore important as it requires the reader/reading community to approach the text in terms of the meaning provided by the text itself, undistorted or altered by the reader's or interpreter's own context as far as this is possible. Obviously the context of the reader may easily have an impact on the meaning of the text because of the pre-suppositions and the pre-understandings carried along with the reading of the text. This process should open the mind of the exegete towards the awareness of how his/her context prompts in her/him the questions that s/he brings to the text and then decide what counts as an answer. During the distantiation stage therefore, as Draper suggests, the reader/reading community should allow the text to be free to speak for itself from its worldview, that is, to be granted enough space and freedom to express its message from its context, even when it speaks with an alien and alienating voice which jars with the sensitivities of our own modern context.

Though the text is given such an opportunity to speak or express its meaning, it is not proper that it should speak alone. There must be interaction between the reader and the text. The reader must be given time to speak because it is a conversation. Each of the interacting parties should avoid being a passive partner in the conversation. This means that the reader/interpreter is not totally silent, because the effective way of hearing from the biblical text is to let "the conversation be a two way process, in which each of the persons involved can interrogate the other" (Draper 2002:13). The reader should be given time to express him/herself, to answer the questions of the text, to

respond to the challenges and new insights s/he received from the message communicated by the text. This falls into Gadamer's observation about the conversation. Gadamer says that the art of conversation is to ensure that the other person is continually engaged with us. Pointing to the Platonic dialogues, he says that interlocutors, once in conversation, show attention one to another by the reiterated "yeses" (and/or "nos"); then each one feels the presence of the other. Gadamer believes that to conduct a conversation does not mean to dominate or out-argue the other person, rather, it requires considering the weight of the other's opinion (Gadamer 1975:330).

The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model provides room for a continuing interaction between the text and the reader/reading community in order to avoid any likelihood of the domination of the text by the reader or vice versa. S/he allows the text to speak, and also respond, with each of them respecting each other's opinion in their dialogue. The question may then be asked, when does the reader/reading community get to speak, as the text must be given enough time and space to express itself? The model reserves the opportunity for the reader to interact with the text during the contextualization phase. It is during this phase that the reader/reading community challenges the text with their questions, problems and difficulties from their own life-situation.

2.1.2.2 Contextualization.
The term "contextualization" comes from the verb to contextualize which the *Oxford Dictionary* defines as: "to consider something in relation to the situation in which it happens or exists" (Wehmeier 2000:480) or "to place in, or treat as part of, a context" (Simpson and Weimer 1989:821). As noticed above, one aspect that motivated Draper in the reformulation of the scriptural criticism by Grenholm and Patte was his focus on the context. Ukpong understands the term "context" as referring to the background against which a text is to be interpreted. In particular, he refers to an existing human community such as a country, local church, ethnic group etc, designated as the subject of the interpretation. This includes the people's worldview and historical, social, economic, political and religious life experiences (Ukpong 1995a:6). The act of analyzing the context of the reader/reading community is what Draper refers to with the term

contextualization. When reading the Bible bearing in mind our context, we give priority to the context of the reader, not because the Bible does not confront us with the Word of God, but because we are pre-disposed by our own social, economic, political and cultural context in a certain way (Draper 2002:16).

Draper believes that the social location of the reader/interpreter determines the kind of questions and tools s/he will use to interpret the text as well as the kind of answer s/he expects. It is primarily during this moment that the reader/interpreter speaks back to the text, challenging it with the specific questions and problems from his/her own life-situation or more precisely from his/her setting and context. It is indeed obvious that the knowledge of the reader/interpreter's context helps her/him to recognize specific needs from her/his own worldview, which allows her/him to interact effectively with the text. This awareness aroused Draper's interest to go further and call the reader/interpreter to study and understand who s/he is, what is his/her setting, his/her culture, in order to know and consider all the circumstances surrounding him/her, and the influence they may make on his/her understanding of the biblical text which was written to a completely different people in a different society.

Ukpong supports Draper's emphasis on studying one's context, by saying that a critical study of the interpreter's context enables her/him to be aware of the influences that work on her/him as s/he goes about reading the text, utilizing them positively and thus exercising control over them (Ukpong 1995a:7). However, the critical study, or differently put, the knowledge of one's context, does not mean that there is a context that reads the Bible better. Rather, it helps the reader/reading community to make an effective interpretation which fits his/her context and is thus beneficial to him/her or the reading community. Hence, the contextualization process is a phase during which the exegete goes further, that is from what the text possibly meant to its first readers/hearers to what the text means for him/her or his/her community of faith in his/her own time. In short, Draper sums up the goal of this phase by saying that it aims to help us understand ourselves as historical beings rooted in a specific time and place, confronted by a historical text that is also rooted in a specific time and place (Draper 2001:156). This is a

tool for confronting the Word of God then allowing it to speak to our contemporary social, cultural, economic and political situation."[13] Depending on the goal of the reader/interpreter, it is from this perspective of the deep knowledge of his/her context or worldview that s/he embarks on the reading of the biblical text, which is identified as 'reading the text against the context of the reader'. This stage leads the reader/interpreter to a climax of his/her conversation with the text, the third pole, the moment called appropriation.

One of the necessary consequences of prioritizing the role of the reader and the reader's context in the way outlined above, is that the reader's questions and concerns will not necessarily or even likely be the same as that of the text in its own context. The "interpretive lens" does not derive from the text but from the reader.[14] However, even supposedly "objective" hermeneutical models are dominated by the concerns of the modern reader. For instance modern historical and scientific concerns which dominate many if not most of the commentaries on John's Gospels are completely alien to the world of the text itself and just as likely to obscure or distort the interpretation of the text. In the case of the Tri-polar theoretical framework, this gap is highlighted and acknowledged. Nevertheless, this approach does seek to give the text a moment of autonomy and a "voice" which may speak back to the reader. In fact it is precisely that "voice" which enables the reader to reach towards a changed praxis in their context, because of the reader's acknowledgment of the nature of the text as sacred text.

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[13] Victor Cole (1998:17-19) speaks about the four differences between what he calls theologies of contextualization and contextual theology. One of marked differences is the database used for theologizing. He names two separate sources or databases: the absolute database, which is the Bible, God's inscripturated Word, and the second part, the relative database which consists on one's contemporary social, cultural setting. Cole believes that the difference between the two resides in the fact that when dealing with the theologies of contextualization, very little is drawn from the absolute, i.e. from the Bible. However, he is aware that even in evangelical theologies the tendency is to draw solely from the Bible to the neglect of our contemporary and social and cultural setting. Cole therefore suggests that the contextual evangelical theology ought to let the absolute data confront with the relative one. I find that Cole's ideas agree with Draper's emphasis on the contextual exegesis which stresses the exegesis of the biblical texts both within its socio- cultural context as well as the social, cultural setting of the reader.
[14] Gerald West (2009) describes this as the "ideo-theological option" of the reader.

2.1.2.3 Appropriation

This last phase of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model is identified as the climax of the interpretive process. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term appropriation as taking something as one's own or for one's own use (Simpson and Weimer 1989:587). Draper expresses the same idea. He sees this stage as a process of owning the Word, owning the message received from the text as one's own, accepting the meaning of the text and its implications for the context of the reader/interpreter. This is a stage of appropriation of the sacred text in the light of the context of the reader/ interpreter. In fact, from the description of this moment by Patte, Grenholm and Draper, this is a moment whereby the context of all the text, its readers, the community of faith and its context are brought to a dynamic relation. The horizon of the text and that of the reader fuse together to form not a third horizon separate from the former two, but makes a new horizon. It is during this phase that the reader/interpreter/reading community of faith acquires a new understanding of the message presented by the text.

The combination of the inputs of these three scholars, Grenholm, Patte and Draper, results in a strong model for interpretation. However, there is also a need to look into its strengths or weakness.

2.2 Evaluation of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model

The choice of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model to provide the framework for the present study was motivated by appropriateness for a contextual exegesis of this nature. The following section points out strengths as well as limitations of aspects of the model.

2.2.1 Strengths of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model

The major strengths of this model are based on its aim of obtaining an appropriate interpretation of the Bible by allowing the biblical text to express the meaning of the text. This step helps exegetes to be faithful to that meaning and not distort it while applying it to their own contexts. The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model reserves room for understanding the text the way the implied readers may have understood it, and at the same time it provides opportunities for understanding the text from the perspective of the reader or

exegete's context. This is in line with Grenholm's and Patte's observation that with this model of interpretation pastors/priests as well as other conscious believers 'strive' to be responsible when discerning and formulating the teaching of the Scripture for believers today (Grenholm 2000:6).

This mode of interpretation agrees with Stephen Bevans' observation about contextual theology. He believes that contextual theology takes into account the faith experience of the past that is recorded in scripture and kept alive, preserved, defended even perhaps neglected or suppressed, and also takes into account the experience of the current context. Bevans stresses the meaning of the text in the past and the present, as does the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model. He focuses on the act of being faithful to the experience and context of the past. In other words, he strives to draw the meaning of the text, being as faithful as possible to its context in the past, and also owning that message from the perspective of the present context. He then emphasizes that theology can be authentic only when what has been received is appropriated, made our own. He believes that this happens only when what was received from the context of the past, that is, the meaning of the text from its original context, is passed through the sieve of our own individual and contemporary experience (Bevans 2002:5).

The attention paid to both the context of the text and the context of the interpreter constitutes a considerable strength of the model. In the case of this study for instance, I am very much aware that the selected biblical texts I have to deal with in the Fourth Gospel are about people from a community very different from Rwandan culture. Although they may be speaking about the role of women, those women were in a totally different society in the early centuries. Now Rwandan women are living in the twenty-first century, in a very different setting, so the distantiation phase of this approach will be a useful tool in attempting to understand what the selected texts might have possibly meant in their past contexts. The goal here is to attempt to allow the texts to express their divine revelatory qualities that are important to my context.

This interpretive tool is therefore designated to help me avoid distortions in meaning, as much as this can be done. The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model also has the advantage of being an integrative approach. It respects other approaches, in conformity with Grenholm and Patte's observation that scholarly integrity in any interpretation requires integrating a plurality of approaches (Grenholm and Patte 2000:2). Grenholm and Patte are aware that their approach could not claim to be an exhaustive method of biblical interpretation; it shows its inclusive aspect by welcoming and valuing other interpretive approaches. These contribute to its task of the scrutiny of biblical meaning. The accommodating character of the model will allow the incorporation of some aspects of inculturation and liberation hermeneutics in the contextualization phase of the present study, as we shall see below.

The Model is also worth commending for its capacity to interrelate the three poles of interpretation in a complementary way. Grenholm and Patte believe that the three poles represent three loci where interpretation takes place, as well as three loci where revelation occurs for believers. Draper argues that the exegetical goal of the whole process of the model is only reached when there has been a full exploration of all the three stages of interpretation, then the appropriation may be reached. Bevans also expresses the same idea saying that contextual theology is authentic only when the message we receive from the text is appropriated, made our own (Draper 2001:154; Grenholm 2000:14; Bevans 2002:5). The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model is viewed to be an important tool for contextual exegesis, although it has its limitations.

2.2.2 Limitations of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model

Although the strengths of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model are appreciated, like many other interpretive approaches, this model cannot assume to provide all the answers to all the problematic issues involved in the analysis of biblical texts. This section does not claim to exhaust the limitations of the Tri-Polar Model; its focus is on a few that affect its applicability to the present work.

As noticed earlier, Grenholm and Patte, as well as Draper (2001:155), believe that the three stages of the Tri-Polar Model are of equal standing, which implies that during the

interpretation process one may start from any of the stages when applying the model to the text. This suggestion may create some confusion in the applicability of the model to some research work if it is understood that the order of the poles never matters. I would suggest rather that the choice of order for the three poles be determined by the nature of the research work one is undertaking. This applies especially to the distantiation and the contextualization poles. For instance, if a person is doing a contextual study and understands very well the context against which they are reading the biblical text, they may start from the analysis of the biblical text, the distantiation phase. But when the context against which they are reading the text is not totally understood, starting from the study of that context is more advisable, more so if the context of the reader/interpreter is to be the subject and not the object of interpretation.

In studies such as the present work, I find it especially difficult to begin the process with the appropriation phase because, as it appears in the elaboration of the method from the perspectives of Grenholm, Patte and Draper, the appropriation phase consists of hearing the biblical message, owning it and accepting its challenges, thus being affected by the message or neglecting it as mentioned above. It is therefore difficult to move on to the appropriation of the message before accessing that particular message, that is before studying the text, studying and understanding one's own context, so as to understand the message as it is challenging to a particular life-situation. In rare cases, the reader/interpreter may like to start by looking at how s/he is already appropriating the text to her/his context. But these are exceptional cases; otherwise the appropriation of the message comes through the dialogue between the reader/reading community of faith and the text.

The emphasis on the study of the text, especially the particular focus on allowing it to be on its own in order for it to speak by itself, is admirable aspect of the model. However, the reader/interpreter must be warned against the risk of producing a literary interpretation of the text with a meaning that may not be relevant to today's context - for example, the passages in the letters to the Corinthians and to Timothy on the issue of worship (1 Cor. 13:33ff, 1 Tim. 2:11-15) and women's participation as well as several

other biblical passages. Such risk is minimized as long as the message received by the reader/believer of the text passes through the "sieve" of his/her own context or life situation.

Again, examining the practicability of interpretation during the process of contextualization and the appropriation poles, I would agree with Samba's observation that there is no established distinction between the two phases, that these two phases/poles are rather interwoven, and not clearly distinctive (Samba 2002:40). In fact, it may not be easy to know when you have passed from the contextualization stage to appropriation. There are some gaps in the aspect of dealing with the reader/interpreter's context. This is where aspects of the inculturation approach can be useful to supplement to the Tri-Polar Model, by supplying a methodology that guides the analysis of the interpreter's context. Ukpong (1995a :11-12) has suggested some steps to follow in the analysis of the reader/ interpreter's context. I found these steps helpful for the analysis of the Rwandan context as required by this study. I will therefore make use of a combination of the Tri-Polar Model and some stages of Inculturation Hermeneutics during the contextualization pole in the analysis of the Rwandan context.

Another limitation is displayed by the important gap which is observed at the level of the appropriation "pole". This is a phase whereby a conversation takes place between the text and its context, and the interpreter's context. The promoters of the Tri-Polar Model have not explained in detail the process of this conversation, especially how the gap between the two contexts is bridged for the conversation to take place. At this stage, West's suggestion may be helpful. He clarifies that the conversation between the text and the interpreter's context is facilitated by the reader. It is the reader who enables the regular back-and-forth movement between text and context, thus making the text and context mutually engage (West 2009:250). In the process of appropriation, the context of the reader prompts him/her, through his/her ideological commitment to it and through its ideological formation of him/her. West observes that similarly, the sacred text prompts the reader through his/her theological orientation towards it and through its theological formation of him/her (West 2009:254). West contends that the social location of the

reader influences his/her ideo-theological orientation with which he/she approaches the text. For West, the whole process of interpretation is an integrative dynamic between the three poles which he describes as follows:

> The contextual pole makes contribution to the ideo-theological orientation of the appropriation pole, in terms of the reader's social location and the choices readers make about their social location. The textual pole makes a contribution to the ideo-theological orientation of the appropriation pole, in terms of its own core axis (as discerned by particular readers) (West 2009:255).

Notwithstanding the limitations of the Tri-Polar approach, I find the model helpful. For the purposes of this study, the limitations of this model will be minimized by supplementing it, in the contextual phase, with aspects of inculturation and, in the appropriation phase, by taking into consideration the concepts of social location and ideo-theological orientation as described by West. The application of the Tri-Polar Interpretive approach to this study is described in the following section.

2.3 The applicability of the Tri-Polar method to the present study

The Tri-Polar Exegetical Model adopted as a guide to this study, strongly influences its shape. Thus, the study will comprise three main parts related to the three phases of the model, namely, the distantiation, contextualization, and appropriation phases. This research work is conceived as a conversation between the interpreter and the selected biblical texts from the Fourth Gospel. The texts will be read against the background of the Rwandan context. This explains therefore the reason why the contextualization phase will come first in this work.

2.3.1 Contextualization phase

This is a phase that focuses on the analysis of the Rwandan worldview which provides the context for interpretation. Although this phase is part of the Tri-Polar Model, aspects of Inculturation Hermeneutical approaches are incorporated because of their relevance in the analysis of the interpreter's context. Before discussing more about the analysis of the context, it is important to have a brief description of Ukpong's understanding of Inculturation Hermeneutics.

Inculturation is a term which obviously is not an invention of Ukpong. The term refers to a concept coined by church people and theologians in order to express the interrelationship between the Christian faith and cultures. Ukpong provides his definition of Inculturation Hermeneutics arguing that it is a biblical interpretation method concerned with the creation of an encounter between the biblical text and the African context, whose main focus is on the communities that receive the text, rather than the text itself or on those that produced it. He presents the development of this method of Biblical interpretation in Africa in three main phases (Ukpong 1999:313-329):

Phase one was from the 1930s until the 1970s. It consists of a reactive and apologetic phase. Ukpong argues that 'during this phase African culture and religion was condemned, actually considered as demonic and immoral by some Christian missionaries of the 19th and the 20th centuries'. He continues his argument by saying that some westerners who did not share the same view with these missionaries endeavoured to legitimatize African religion and culture vis-à-vis Christianity. This phase was dominated by comparative studies (conducted mainly in West, East and Central Africa) whose important result was that African traditional religion came to be seen as 'Africa's Old Testament'. In other words, African culture and religion came to be seen as a preparation, or a fertile ground for the gospel (Ukpong 1999:314-315).

Phase two was from the 1970s until 1990s. This period is identified as the most dynamic and rewarding for biblical studies in Africa. It is described as a reactive-proactive phase. During this period there were reactions to the former phase which gradually gave way to a proactive approach. The African context was used as a resource in biblical interpretation. It is in this phase that two main approaches, inculturation and liberation, emerged and dominated biblical interpretation. Inculturation emerged in biblical interpretation because, despite the comparative studies which had given value to African culture as a preparation for the gospel in the first phase, Christianity in Africa was still considered as a foreign religion represented by foreign symbols and practices. There was a desire to make Christianity relevant to the African 'religio-cultural context' and that is

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how the inculturation movement in theology was formed. During this period there was the rise of the liberation movement which 'sought to confront all forms of oppression, poverty and marginalization' in the African society. Ukpong notes that the liberation trend is expressed in three main approaches: Liberation hermeneutics, Black Theology and Feminist Hermeneutics (1999:316-317).

Phase three extends from the 1990s to date. This phase is described as proactive because it is during this phase that biblical studies in Africa made an innovative contribution. The two main methods, inculturation and liberation, that arose in the second phase developed two main orientations. The first orientation is towards the recognition of the role of the ordinary reader in biblical reading with all his/her contributions in the process of academic biblical interpretation. The second orientation seeks to make the African context the subject of the biblical interpretation (Ukpong 1999:324). It is from this perspective that contextual biblical study developed.

As has been discussed, in contextual biblical study, the Bible is read in the context of a specific situation. Ukpong, like Draper and West, uses the example of a specific situation in South Africa, where the Bible is read against the situation of racial oppression and poverty, in the context of faith and a commitment to personal and social transformation. To briefly reiterate, the particularity of contextual study of biblical texts is that it recognizes the perspectives and concern of the ordinary African reader of the Bible. Contextual biblical study has the goal of empowering ordinary readers of the Bible, those who are not academically trained to critically study the Bible in relation to their life-situation for their individual or collective transformation. There is an interaction between ordinary and trained readers of the Bible such that the ordinary readers are helped to be critical by using analytical resources while reading the Bible. Ukpong clarifies that in developing the hermeneutics for his approach, the resources of people's culture and historical life experience are used to complement conventional critical tools of biblical exegesis (Ukpong 1999:325). The contextual Bible study is incorporated in this third phase of the development of Inculturation Hermeneutics. The Bible is read against the

(African) context of readers which provides the critical resources for biblical interpretation, and at the same time, is the subject of interpretation.

Ukpong's contribution to Inculturation Hermeneutics resulted from his dissatisfaction with other inculturation and liberation models. In these models, Ukpong notices a lack of attention to social issues such as poverty, political oppression, marginalization, and lack of attention to African religio-cultural issues such as belief in ancestors, the spirits, spirit possession, witchcraft, and so on. Ukpong seeks to promote an Inculturation Hermeneutic that he describes as having 'a holistic approach to culture', which embodies both the secular and religious aspects of culture. He understands Inculturation Hermeneutics as an approach that consciously and explicitly seeks to interpret the biblical text from the socio-cultural perspectives of different people, including both their religious and secular culture as well as their social and historical experience (Ukpong 1999:190).

Ukpong developed an inculturation model which is characterized by three main features: first, the reading of the Bible within the socio-worldview of the African milieu, that is, within the religious, economic, social and political contexts of Africa. Secondly, he emphasizes the role of ordinary readers who are influenced by their traditional culture as opposed to the western worldview. Thirdly, he stresses the African socio-cultural perspective, creating a conceptual framework of interpretation.

Ukpong's approach emphasizes the African context as being the subject of interpretation for the Bible. He stresses the analysis of the reader's context from the perspective of the worldview of its culture. He estimates that the reader/interpreter should be an insider in the culture, that is, someone who has acquired knowledge, experience and insight into the culture, meaning, the subject of interpretation (Ukpong 1995a:4-5). The objective of his approach is the actualization of the biblical message in today's context so as to create integration between faith and life. Ukpong outlines five components and characteristics of the inculturation process which are: the interpreter, his/her context, the text, the conceptual framework and procedures (Ukpong 1995a:5).

The focus of this study remains only on the reader/interpreter's context as clarified earlier. Though the other components of Ukpong's inculturation approach are also relevant, my interest remains in Ukpong's way of analysing the context. Ukpong has suggested some useful steps or levels for studying the context of the reader/interpreter, the context that provides the background against which the text is to be read and analysed. He suggests five steps and clarifies that not all of them are required in all cases. In the present study those steps stand as useful tools for the study of the Rwandan context which forms the background against which the selected texts from the Fourth Gospel will be read. Following are the five levels of analysis, some of which may be combined (Ukpong 1995a:11-12).

At level one, a *phenomenological* analysis is done aiming at the clarification of the specific issue in the context of the interpreter against which the text is to be interpreted. In this study, the issue is already identified as the contribution of Rwandan women in promoting peace and unity.

At level two, a *socio-anthropological* analysis focuses on the worldview of the people with respect to the issue under discussion. In this thesis this level will point out how Rwandan people perceive the contribution of Rwandan women as peacemakers.

At the third level, a *historical* analysis seeks to investigate the issue in relation to the history of the concerned community. The focus here is on what Rwandan women have contributed to peace building as well as their failure in the past. This includes both their achievements and their failures in peace-building and reconciliation throughout Rwandan history.

At the fourth level, a *social* analysis looks at the issue in relation to various aspects of the society. This includes the cultural, economic and political aspects of the issue. The question to ask at this level is on the social, political, economic and religious dimensions and implications attached to the issue of women's involvement in peace building. At this stage, it will be necessary to point out some gender and liberation issues that arise in the

discussion on the rights and prerogatives of women in Rwandan society, how they are equipped to perform their roles and the challenges they face in the process.

The last level is concerned with the *religious* dimension of the matter. This level is very important to this study as it is likely to constitute a space for the dialogue with the selected biblical texts.

The Rwandan context analysed at the above levels will provide the perspective from which the selected texts will be read. The biblical texts will be analysed during the distantiation phase of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model.

2.3.2 Distantiation phase

The analysis of the selected biblical texts constitutes the second pole in the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model. In this distantiation phase, the passages to be analysed are texts selected from the Gospel of John that refer to the behaviour of women in social crisis and provide hints connected to their peacemaking attributes.[15] These include the following passages: John 2:1-12 together with John 19:25-30; John 4:4-42; John 11:1- 12:11 and John 18:15-17. There will be a conversation between these women from the first century Mediterranean context and Rwandan women in the contemporary context. Each of the selected passages will be analysed separately so that each narrative will be understood in its own immediate context. The exegesis of each passage will seek to understand the message conveyed through each female character portrayed in the narrative with respect to reconciliation and/or to building unity, peace and harmony in her society.

As explained before, the analysis of the texts will be guided by narrative criticism. It was also mentioned in the above sections that this work is done mainly from the perspective of Rwandan realities. During the distantiation phase, the analysis includes discussion of the context of the texts, seeking to understand how they were understood in the ancient context of the Mediterranean world. However, the end goal of the analysis of the texts is

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[15] The case of the adulterous woman in John 8:1-11 is not included in this study. The presentation of this woman as a victim coupled with the textual problems of this passage renders it less helpful for the purpose of this study.

to point out how they can be are understood in the Rwandan context of conflict. This falls into Iser's observation that the goal of narrative criticism is to allow the text to communicate its meaning to the reader by making him/her involved in the world of the text and to help him/her understand it more clearly in his/her own world (Iser 1974:vi). Hence, narrative criticism here determined by African realities will play the role of assisting me to understand the message of the biblical texts in my own worldview or context. Malbon (2000:17) has suggested questions that will guide the literary analysis of the texts. The analysis will point out the main characters in the texts as suggested in the section under the study of the texts above.[16] This phase will lead to the appropriation of the message received from the texts.

2.3.3 Appropriation phase

At the appropriation stage in the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, the interpretation will bring together the horizon of the text and its community and that of the interpreter and his/her context to mediate a new consciousness leading to a new praxis (Draper 2001:158). At this juncture the interpreter will start the conversation on behalf of the women from the analysis of their roles and the role of the biblical women. I will bring the horizon of my community to mediate with the horizon of the women in the Fourth Gospel together to learn from each other. My social location as a Rwandan woman and the sharing of the socio-cultural challenges with other women in my community influences my ideo-theological orientation (West 1993:256) toward promoting the freedom of women from socio-cultural boundaries that prevent them from realizing their full potential in fulfilling their role and assuming their responsibilities in the society.

This work concurs with the approach which seeks to critique or re-interpret the biblical texts that are oppressive to women and/or treat them as inferior to men. It also emphasizes the aspect of the approach that focuses on the theology of creation which affirms the basic truth that men and women are both created in the image of God and censures any theological ideology, community or society that supports exclusion,

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[16] The suggested questions are provided in the section of Methodology as well as the details of the meaning of characters and their roles.

violence and discrimination. This is in perfect agreement with Ukpong's statement (1999:323) that God stands on the side of the oppressed to liberate them. Therefore, the role of women in reconciliation and peacemaking - the theme of this work - requires a biblical interpretation which speaks against their oppression and allows them to play their roles freely. For instance, starting from creation whereby Eve is said to have been created from Adam's rib, those who want to misinterpret the passage for oppression interpret it as proof of a woman's inferiority to the man instead of denoting the similarity in their identity in nature and the equality in their marital status. This work emphasizes the interpretation that reveals the positive role of women in the history of salvation and in the life of the church, as will be shown by one of the texts.

The appropriation phase is expected to be the culmination of the interpretive process where the text is appropriated in the light of the context of the interpreter, which in our case is the Rwandan traditional and contemporary context. It is during the appropriation phase that Rwandan women are expected to be challenged in their expected role in building peace, unity and harmony in their contemporary communities. In other words, it is during this phase of the model that there will be an evaluation of the role of Rwandan women in the process of reconciliation in their context, the pre-genocide as well as the post-genocide period. This will come as a result of engaging with the challenges faced by the women of the Fourth Gospel in their own time and setting during the times of conflicts.

However, considering the basic objectives of this work which are based on the biblical view of peacemaking and reconciliation that I identify as the main driving force of this work, I will start with an understanding of reconciliation before the analysis of Rwandan context.

CHAPTER 3: CONFLICT, DETERMINISM AND REVELATION

3.0 Introduction

This research work aims at examining the role of women in reconciliation and peacemaking in selected texts of the Fourth Gospel as specified earlier. The data from the study of the biblical texts will help to make valuable recommendations to Rwandan women towards the development of their cultural and Christian roles of peacemaking and reconciliation and in the way they can apply insights gained from the texts to the contemporary situation in the aftermath of the genocide. The aim is to help women to contribute towards the building of peace in order to prevent that kind of tragedy from happening again in our society.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish an understanding of peacemaking and reconciliation by engaging with key theories from the social sciences. These will be critiqued from the perspective of biblical hermeneutics.[17] Moreover, because women are the main characters in this work, this chapter examines some cultural views related to their role in conflict management, which is basic for an effective and lasting reconciliation.

However, the concept of reconciliation is a wide and complex topic. This research makes no attempt to exhaust the meaning of all the theories of reconciliation or their practice; rather, the current chapter aims at developing a basic meaning of the concept which will assist the researcher and any other reader of this work to understand the concept of reconciliation as it is referred to in the present thesis. Hence, this section undertakes a brief review of the literature devoted to the subject of reconciliation in order to be acquainted with the views of scholars in that field. That interaction will also result in understanding the meaning of some major and important terms relevant to this particular

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[17] The thesis will briefly examine some of the fundamental theories of conflict theories grounded in sociology. We will use extensively the theories elaborated by Metta Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Talcott and Hanson. When dealing with the biblical theories we will use a variety of literature which deal with some biblical views of dealing with conflict.

research work and how they might be applied to it. These include the terms conflict, peacemaking, peace building and unity building.

Generally, speaking about 'reconciliation' implies a situation of misunderstanding between two or more parties. That situation sometimes leads to conflict which in many cases results in open fights or violence and which may in turn lead to divisions or separation between people. Here arises the question of understanding what exactly the term 'conflict' refers to, especially from the perspective of this study, before entering into more detail on the concept of reconciliation.

3.1 Understanding the term "conflict"

Different scholars have discussed what they understand by the term 'conflict', some by providing either straightforward definitions of the term or by using examples. For instance, Palmer (1990) refers to the term by pointing to a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not by both. Thus, conflicts arise when the actions of one group threaten the values, goals or behaviours of the other (Palmer 1990:4). Tidwell argues that the term 'conflict' is in fact used to refer to variety of things in an assortment of contexts. According to his observation, the meaning of the term 'conflict' depends on the context from which each individual takes a particular event or incident. He argues that the term 'conflicts' includes a number of words describing the incident, such as fight, argument, contest, debate, combat, war, and other evocative terms (Tidwell 1998:30). Hence, if we take Tidwell's comment into consideration we may argue that the concept of conflict is better understood when it is seen within its social setting. Vlassenroot concurs with this view that the context of the conflict helps to appreciate the roots of conflict and to understand why and how people turn to it (Vlassenroot 2006:49).

However, Anstey (1997) believes that generally the term refers to a situation where each individual or group struggles over values, seeking to neutralize or injure the other in order to obtain its objectives or goals. During that process of striving to meet their goals, sometimes the situation gets out of control between those parties, and so an overt conflict

may occur which leads to serious consequences, even to death (Anstey 1997:2). The above definitions, from both Palmer and Anstey, point to the issue of different goals or interests as the root of conflicts between two or more parties. But this argument is not unchallenged because people may be in conflict even when they have the same goals. This happens especially when both parties do not agree on the approaches to be taken towards achieving the same goal or when there is competition in reaching it.

But again, it is observed that the divergence or incompatibility of goals is unavoidable among human beings. It is a fact that as human beings are made unique, they also have different views and opinions. Blackman, one of the specialists in conflict resolution, concurs that having different goals is unavoidable. She argues that the fact that each individual has his/her own opinion is not in itself a problem because conflict is part of life. She believes that conflict is simply the result of a misunderstanding of goals, and improved communication can address the situation effectively (Blackman 2003:9-10). Blackman is right in her argument but conflict of interest can be a factor leading to serious conflict not only misunderstanding.

Anstey agrees with this view, saying that conflict occurs in all human relationships whether at the international, national, or community level, within churches, families and social organizations. He believes therefore that 'conflict is a normal part of human relationship' (Anstey 1993:16). Fisher agrees, commenting that "Conflicts are a fact of life, inevitable and often creative" (Fisher et al 2000:4).

After all the above arguments, one may conclude that conflicts are part of life. But this raises the question: when does conflict become a problem? And if sometimes a conflict turns into a problem, how can we prevent the side effects of those conflicts? If, despite our efforts, the conflict goes beyond our control, how can one deal with it? In an attempt to answer these questions, I will discuss some theories of conflict resolution which have their background in sociology, as well as some biblically-based theories.

3.2 Conflict theories

Conflict is a phenomenon that concerns human relationship. The discussion of such a subject is to be located in the domain of sociology, a discipline defined as "the study of human groups' life" (Spencer 1985:6). Sociological theories deal with the study of conflict extensively but because of space and the scope of this work, only a selected number of these will be briefly discussed. These include theories that are primarily the products of Metta Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, namely Structural Functionalism, Equilibrium Model, Conflict Theory and International Theory.

3.2.1 Structural Functionalism Model and Equilibrium Model

As the appellation of this model suggests, it is basically made up of two related concepts: 'structure and function'. Known as the 'structural functionalism model' or simply 'functionalism model' (Spencer 1985:15), it is defined as a broad perspective in the social sciences which addresses social structure in terms of the function of its constituent elements, namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. These aspects of society are considered as organs that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. A structural-functionalist approach "emphasizes the forms of a society, the functions its parts play, and assumes that the society seeks equilibrium among its different parts and groups" (Hanson and Oakama 1998:9). The function of these constituent elements is compared to the structures of an organism, such as the liver, lungs, kidneys etc. They argue then that as these structures function together to maintain the whole body system, so do the social structures in any human society. The supporters of this theory believe that each social structure or custom fulfils specific goals in the society. Some aim at maintaining unity and respect among people, keeping good relationships between individuals or helping the monitoring of the movement of the members of the society.

For instance, the rites or ceremonies through which adolescents became integrated into some societies are greatly supported by the functionalists and considered to be a permanent social structure, even if they are not pleasing to the adolescents who undergo those ceremonies. As long as they maintain the unity of the society they are not to be disturbed. Moreover, those rites serve as ways for the elders to keep full control over the

adolescents (Spencer 1985:15). Spencer gives an example of a traditional stone axe in the Australian society which was used to monitor the population before the emergence of Western civilization in that community. The use of that stone by the young people, which was monitored by the elders, served as a method of social control and respect for the elders in the community. But the change brought by the use of modern stones was not welcomed by the conservative leaders as they lost control over the society (Spencer 1985:62). Structural functionalists then criticize the change of any custom. They support any form of customs as long as it does not cause conflict in the society.

This applies to other structures like patriarchal power in some African countries, which cannot be challenged. In some societies for instance, women are abused by the domineering power of men but structural-functionalism is viewed as part of the philosophical tradition and culture in many societies; the system cannot be challenged.

This is seen also in the Rwandan society where the tradition of women abuse is still rife, especially for the large number of peasant women. But unchallenged structure is not observed in terms of women's fate alone. As it will be developed in the analysis of Rwandan context, civil conflicts are also promoted by the lack of challenge to the existing structures. Some groups continue to dominate the others because of the existing functions of structures in the country. Thus, even though the structural-functionalists believe that the society is at peace when there are structures that function to maintain its usual status, I agree with this observation: "The major drawback of this approach (the structural-functionalist approach) is that it tends to accept simply as 'givens' social inequalities and the domination of one group over the other" (Hanson and Oakaman 1998:9). The fact is that the higher class of the society can enjoy the structures while the lower class is obliged to suppress their feelings. In other words, they live with hidden bitterness which sometimes explodes even into deadly violence.

This approach then is not the preference of this present work as it tends to promote inordinate power and privilege to some people or groups in the society at the expense of the others. This type of substructure cannot facilitate reconciliation.

The Equilibrium Model purports that society can automatically regulate its situation, changing conflict into a better situation. They argue that as the thermostat regulates itself and keeps the air in the house at a particular temperature, so does the society. The point here is that the society possesses the automatism of regulating its situation by keeping itself away from problems or conflicts. They believe that the society plays that role by solving any problem as it arises, before causing damage (Spencer 1985:14-15). Their assumption is then that society is in a balanced state without conflict. However, this theory is not unchallenged because if this capacity was available, no society would experience any conflict; in other words, the world would enjoy total peace.

These theories should be criticized as being oriented towards the status quo and hence inherently oppressive. This is because it privileges the existence of unequal structures in a society as normative and unchangeable. Some social practices are maintained not because they are proved valuable as solutions to the problems and challenges of the society as a whole, but simply to maintain the status quo and hence work in the interest of the ruling powers. In some societies, for example, racial minorities and women are excluded from some jobs, not because their exclusion is supported by the majority of members of the social system, but because some influential groups have power and have interests in keeping them out of work. These models privilege and maintain practices or customs which function 'for the ruling elite' and not for the wellbeing of the society as a whole. These models therefore are not appropriate for this work as they maintain the situation of power, dominion and inequality among the population, which is one of the causes of conflict in my country, and indeed of every country.

3.2.2 Conflict Theory and Interactional Symbolism Theory

Conflict Theory challenges the idea that the society can be without conflict. Conflict theorists believe that societies are usually in a state of conflict; harmony is rare because competition and struggle between groups for power and wealth are the normal situation in any human society. They do not support the idea that society solves its problems automatically, as functionalists and the allies of equilibrium theory believe. Conflict theorists observe that there is injustice in societies. They argue that there are very few

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social patterns that exist because they are in everybody's interest. To them, whenever a group gains, a different group is likely to lose. Hence, one's getting ahead will always be at the expense of another (Spencer 1985:16-17, 200). Hanson and Oakaman concur, and hold the view that a conflict approach seeks for solutions for a society in conflict. They argue that a conflict approach attends to tensions between social factions, institutions and subcultures that are the product of power relations in which one group seeks to dominate, control manipulate or subdue the others for its own advantage. According to their argument, the approach seeks to understand who benefits from the social structures and how the conflict can be managed (Hanson and Oakaman 1998:9).

However, adherents to Conflict Theory do not necessarily consider conflict to be negative. Some of them, such as George Simmel, believe that conflict can be positive because it may serve as means of uniting people within a group, even while it is a negative force dividing that group from other groups. This happens particularly when a group of people or individuals form an alliance for working together against another group or individual(s). Thus, even if they were in conflict before, they can become united and friends because of sharing the same goal of fighting the same 'enemy' (Spencer 1985). Friedkin criticizes those models, saying that they lack a systematic analysis of the mechanism of the interaction process. He then suggests that in order to understand how conflicts are solved, there is need for a clear and convincing analysis of the interactional process that occurs in terms of the issue which provokes the conflict (Friedkin 1998:19).

The brief analysis of these theories has found the Conflict Theory of Simmel and others the most helpful point. However the elements of determinism and reductionism need to be challenged from the biblical point of view. Otherwise it would always be the most powerful who wins in situations of conflict. The cross and resurrection at the heart of the Christian Gospel, and the teachings of Jesus and the role of women in John's Gospel suggest limitations to this simple determinism. It is then important to briefly discuss a biblical approach to conflict resolution which is based on the Christian teachings.

3.3 A biblical approach to conflict resolution

A biblical approach to reconciliation then critiques social determinism on the basis of biblical revelation According to Stassen the biblical approach claims to address the conflict from its root, basing its strategies on Jesus' teachings (Stassen 1992:33-34). The way of addressing the knot of the problem then is the only way to achieve true reconciliation. "Conflict is not peripheral to the reconciliation process but its very heart. If the sources of conflict are not named, examined, and taken away, reconciliation will not come about (Schreiter 1992:23). Sphar argues that the biblical approach to reconciliation is effective when it is used as a metaphor for salvation, as some people picture the term referring to what God has done for humankind through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Sphar and Simith think that the salvation act uncovers God's work in tearing down walls between people and God, each other and even themselves (Sphar and Simith 2003:2). Their argument seems to convey the message that if one approaches the work of reconciliation from that background of recalling his/her own conflict which was removed by Jesus' work of atonement, s/he may succeed, as it would be easier to forgive and repent from his/ her own contribution to the conflict.

If Sphar and Simith s argument is true - that the biblical approach to reconciliation emphasizes and promotes forgiveness from the victims and repentance from the perpetrators of violence - this approach would fill the gap left by the above theories. Stassen goes further to describe the concrete steps of the biblical approach for conflict resolution embodied in what he called the general rule of reconciliation, which is the love of the enemy. This includes talking to the brother or sister with the intention of seeking to be reconciled, go two miles; love your enemies, pray for them; judge not, but forgive etc. (Stassen 1992:53). Schreiter believes that human forgiveness, which is central to the loving of the enemy, is about not being controlled by the past. "It is the possibility of having a future different from the one that appears to be dictated by past wrongdoing" (Schreiter 1992:58). One may then argue that Stassen's suggested steps do not just happen naturally; they may require a kind of supernatural intervention, because what Stassen identifies as the love of the enemy and Schreiter's observations are not a natural characteristic of human nature.

But the arguments of both Stassen and Schreiter can be illustrated by Immaculée Ilibagiza's forgiveness. Ilibagiza is a survivor of the Rwandan genocide who describes how she managed to forgive the killers of her family and those who tortured her with all kinds of words and attitudes. She claims that because of her personal encounter with a Supreme Being, she was able to overcome the past and forgive her enemies (Ilibagiza 2005:91). [18] It appears that for her, it was because of divine power that she was able to forgive, from a loving heart, a killer who looted her father's house and even tried to kill her. This illustration of love of the enemy portrays the biblical principles which help in overcoming the depths of pain and the causes of conflict in order to reconcile with the enemy.

In terms of this perspective, the present study opts to adopt a model for conflict resolution, which allows the recognition of the conflict in the community[19] that is, which is contextual, and which uses the biblical principles to deal with that conflict. This synthetic theory is identified by this study as a contextual biblical approach to conflict resolution. I found that this approach offers the dynamic perspective where things can change and allow even those considered as weak and neglected- such as women- to participate in the building of peace. In this view, after the study of the contexts, both the Rwandan and the Mediterranean contexts, we will interact with the biblical texts, focusing on some female characters who dealt with cases of conflict in their various contexts. It is expected that the analysis of the peacemaking role of women from the gospel, guided by the biblical principles will provide inspiration for Rwandan women in resolving conflicts as well. But before engaging in the biblical analysis, it is necessary to

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[18] Ilibagiza gives the details of how she struggled to forgive when she met the murderer of her family. "It was past noon and I'd been praying the rosary since dawn for God to give His love and forgiveness to all the sinners in the world. But try as I might, I couldn't bring myself to pray for the killers. That was a problem for me because I knew God expected us to pray for *everyone…*" (Ilibagiza 2005:91). She continues reporting how the authorities were furious with her actions and bombarded her with questions concerning her foolishness of forgiving the one who erased her family. She sums up her answer to those questions by saying: "Forgiveness is what I have to offer" (Ilibagiza 2005:204).
[19] This is facilitated by the theory of conflict grounded in sociology: Conflict Theory as discussed above. This theory is identified as contextual as it deals with the conflict in the community.

understand and briefly discuss some of the key concepts in this work, starting with reconciliation.

3.4 Reconciliation

Different scholars use different terms to define the concept of the term 'reconciliation'. Assefa (n.d.) had some difficulties in finding an exact definition. According to him, the term reconciliation is derived from the Latin word *conciliatus,* which means to come together, to assemble. In Assefa's understanding, the term refers to the act by which people who have been 'apart and split-off from one another begin to stroll or march together again'. Assefa believes that reconciliation means the restoration of broken relationships or the coming together of those who have been alienated and separated from each other by conflicts, in order to create a community again (Assefa n.d:8-9).

Blackman concurs with Assefa by commenting that the term 'reconciliation' means an act of restoration of a broken relationship. To clarify her idea, Blackman points to the Christian religion and goes back to the creation story, of how sin spoiled people's relationship with God. Then she points to the whole process of how God initiated the plan of re-establishing the good relationship with the creation. She claims that the process of God's reconciliation with the creation involves the coming of Christ as a mediator between God and people who restore the good relationship with God and the creation. This process therefore reflects the pattern of a well-planned and effective reconciliation (Blackman 2003:17).

As pointed out by Blackman, the above process of reconciliation involved the presence of another person (Jesus) who stood between the parties who had problems, parties that had split-off (God and humankind). Considering the use of all the definitions provided above, we may sum up that the term 'reconciliation' refers basically to the restoration of broken relationships whereby, in most cases, there had been estrangement of two or more parties. Thus, the renewal of friendship involves the presence of a third person whose task is to facilitate the process of restoration. Looking into it from the view of this work, the biblical theory of reconciliation will be useful as it will sensitize women to play the

role of a third person who stands between those in conflicts. From this perspective, they might be mediators and play the role of restoring peace, as well as becoming instrumental in erasing traumatic memories in their communities.

Here applies Fuller's and May's comment that reconciliation is a complex and long-term process which erases traumatic memories by employing everything such as traditional healing methods and amnesties to new institutional structures, such as truth and reconciliation commissions and the promotion and defence of human rights. Because of the complexity of the process, they argue that such matters embedded in the whole process of reconciliation cannot be left solely to government initiatives. Many hands are needed - for instance they argue that the role of civil society organizations is vital, especially women's organizations and religious leaders (Fuller and May 2006:7).

Fuller and May are also in favour of involving women as 'the third person' in the work of reconciliation. The third person in this act leads us to a Christian understanding of reconciliation. Schreiter discusses the act of reconciliation from a Christian point of view, pointing to God as being the third person in the act. He believes that God is the initiator of the work of reconciliation in the lives of the victims. He argues that ordinary reconciliation is expected to begin with the repentance of the wrongdoers, but experience shows that the latter are rarely willing to acknowledge their wrongdoings (Schreiter 1998:14). The emphasis for Schreiter is on forgiveness from the side of the victim.[20] In this view, through the victim, the wrongdoer comes also to repentance and true interaction between those parties is possible. Schreiter's emphasis on forgiveness leads to Chapman's concept of reconciliation. He views it as a process of developing mutual accommodation between antagonistic people or groups so as to establish a new relationship. In agreement with Schreiter, Chapman also stresses the willingness to let go of the past and not to seek vengeance (Chapman 2003:13).

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[20] Schreiter's view conforms with that of Ilibagiza, illustrated in her act of forgiving the killer of her family.

However, even though the biblical approach to reconciliation involves God as a third party, it does not exclude human beings from their part in maintaining or making peace between separated parties. This raises the importance of defining what we understand by peace, especially from the perspective of this thesis. Below is a brief discussion of the term.

3.5 The meaning of the term 'peace'

Swartley (2006) observes that the term 'peac*e'* in its form of *shalom* is predominant in the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament. He observes that the term 'Shalom' occurs 200 times in the Old Testament and it has many dimensions of meaning such as: wholeness, completeness, well-being, peace, justice, salvation and even prosperity. In some references in the Hebrew Scriptures, for instance in Genesis 29:6; 37:14; 43:27 or Exodus 18:7; Samuel 10:4; 17:18, 22; Jeremiah 15:5, Swartley observes that the term *shalom* occurs often in inquiries about one's welfare. Thus, according to his observation the term includes everything necessary to healthy living like good health, well-being, good fortune, the cohesiveness of the community, relationship with relatives and their state of being, and anything considered necessary for everything to be in order. Swartley continues by pointing to the arguments of some scholars.[21] From the analysis of this argument, Swartley believes that war is not an antithesis to *shalom*; his argument is confirmed by the scene described in the book of 2 Samuel 11:7ff when King David asked Uriah about the *shalom* of war. From this argument therefore, whatever blocks Yahweh's order for the world, whether materially or relationally, is the foe and antithesis of *shalom* (Swartley 2006:28-9). This argument might support the idea that peace or *shalom* stands against oppression or any action that violates the divine order for human life. This is then held to explain positively the participation of Christians or others who opt to be involved in warfare. Sometimes they argue that their plans in engaging in war aim at defending the oppressed; however that cannot be guaranteed to be the end results because during wars usually the innocent and oppressed people are the ones who suffer the consequences.

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[21] Swartley (2006) speaks about the various arguments in terms of the meaning of *shalom* and εἰρήνη as they are discussed by different scholars, such as Perry Yonder, von Rad, Eisenbeis, Westermann, Gerleman and many others. The meaning of these terms is discussed in detail in chapter two of his book.

Moreover, while some believe that only peace is affected because of war, Reardon (1993) disagrees with that idea. She believes that peace goes beyond the absence of war. For her, peace includes the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights as well as fundamental freedom within the society. Moreover, Reardon believes that peace embraces the whole range of actions including security, trust and respect between individuals or social groups. Her observation therefore is that one cannot speak about peace under conditions of economic and sexual inequality or deliberate exploitation of one social group in the population (Reardon 1993:19). She therefore concurs with Spencer who argues that one can not speak about peace in a society where there is racial, gender or tribal inequality (Spencer 1985:17). In other words, there is no peace unless all the populations of a nation enjoy its privileges equally.

Having discussed the meanings of the term 'peace' from the view of different scholars, we need to clarify the working definition of term 'peace' in terms of this work. The term includes the inner state of tranquillity, concord, harmony, mutual respect, enjoyment of the same rights, freedom from war or hostility, and good relationships. The definition applied here agrees with *shalom* in Swartley's definition; that *shalom* primarily signifies a value, an ethical category which denotes the overcoming of strife, quarrels, and social tension as well as the prevention of enmity and war (Swartley 2006:33). Moreover, there is no peace in a society where one group of people, because of its race or tribe, gender, education, colour of skin and so on, does not enjoy the same rights as the others.

The next step takes us to the role of the third person, the mediator, whose role is to restore the broken relationship for successful peace. Understanding the role of the mediator involves discussing key terms in reconciliation: peacemaking and peace-building.

3.6 The role of a mediator in peacemaking and peace-building

Anstey links peacemaking to the role of a mediator. He states that

> In *peacekeeping* the energies of a mediator are committed to keeping warring factions apart to prevent further mutual destruction and, if possible, to allow room for negotiations to be initiated. *Peacemaking* efforts, on the other hand, involve

third-party intervention in negotiations between decision-makers at leadership levels and are directed at building bridges between parties for purposes of creative solution searches and problem-solving. *Peace-building* processes are focused on the social, economic, and psychological environments of people at grassroots level in society and have long-term reconstructive and preventive objectives (Anstey 1997:3-4).

From Anstey's understanding, the role of a mediator is a multifaceted activity. From the approach of peacekeeping, the efforts are concerned with ceasefire and keeping parties away from each other. The peacemaking aspect emphasizes efforts made towards negotiation, with the objective of convincing the divided parties to settle their conflicts. Anstey's last contribution for a mediator involves the peace-building action. Here the mediator is concerned with the changing of attitudes, the uplifting of the social order and the economic development of the society which has suffered as a result of conflicts or violence and their negative consequences. This view shows that the role of the mediator has various aspects, which explains the use of many hands in the act of reconciliation. The multifaceted nature of the reconciliatory role also explains the use of different texts in this work. It is believed that each text will portray a different aspect of conflict and how to handle it.

Considering the damage caused by conflict, reconciliation has a crucial role to play in the attempt to restore the broken relationship and lost trust in the community. One should note however that sometimes the situation of conflict starts as a mere misunderstanding between people, which later on expands and develops into situations of violence and severe bloodshed. Such situations are, for instance, the result of ethnic misunderstandings. These sometimes escalate, leading to civil war or even war on an international scale.

A tangible example may be the case of the genocide in Rwanda. It started simply as a misunderstanding based on ethnicity involving people both inside and outside the country. It later on resulted in an uncontrollable complex war, a full-blown genocide with

murders all over the country, leading even to an international war.[22] As a Rwandan citizen I argue that the effect of the conflict had consequences which even went beyond the Rwandan territory. The present war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (the neighbouring country) is a result of the Rwandan conflicts which have spilled over and are now beyond the country's control. This escalation of violence also motivates the purpose of this work. Is there anything which can be done for reconciliation on Rwandan territory so that our neighbouring countries might also enjoy their peace? Can we assume that if women are sensitized to this situation, especially women who read the Bible, they may become peacemakers and peace-builders through their acceptance of the challenges of their counterparts from the Fourth Gospel?

These questions will be addressed as the thesis unfolds, especially at the appropriation phase during the interaction of the message of the texts with Rwandan women. Before reaching that phase, it is important to have a brief look at the review of literature on women's role in reconciliation generally, in both the past and the present. This requires consideration of their expected roles in conflict management in their various communities.

3.7 Women and conflict management

Some people assume that women are culturally considered and trained to be peacemakers while males are trained for warfare and to be aggressive, but that is a social construct. Diana Francis observes that

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[22]Some other versions of the causes of the genocides will be provided in the next chapter. Timothy Longman (2004) gives his understanding of how a simple conflict can generate into open violence, then gives the details about the evolution of Rwandan ethnic violence. He describes how the matter started as just an ethnic conflict shortly before the independence in 1959, when ethnic identities gained increased significance during the colonial period. The colonial system then reinforced the conflicts which already existed between the two ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi, by empowering the minority Tutsi (15% of the population) over the majority Hutu through the indirect rule of Germany and Belgium. Thus, there was an uprising of Hutu in 1961, but in reality it had started earlier in 1959 with the first acts of violence against Tutsi by the Hutu, who felt increasingly powerless and exploited. Then in November 1959, a Hutu uprising drove many Tutsi chiefs from power and initiated a process of transferring power to Hutu. This led to the deposing of the Tutsi King in 1961. By that time the conflicts were no longer easy to control and the violence led to the killing of many Tutsi while thousands of them were forced to flee the country. Conflicts continued and in 1990 the Tutsi refugees were not allowed to come back to the country. They then decided to attack and the consequences were the genocide in 1994.

People laugh when little boys fight and say that, 'boys will be boys', recreating on a daily basis the notion that to be properly male is to be aggressive. Fighting is seen as an aberration in little girls. They, by contrary, are expected to be gentle and caring…It is inescapable that when we think of violence in general we think – first and foremost – of men, or of men-in–the making. When we think of wars, and images of war, the same is true. Young men are prepared by the society for war (Francis 2004:66-67).

Indeed some cultures and traditions consider women to be more caring and prone to unity building. That assumption is often expressed in their adages and proverbs. This is exemplified by the Rwandan culture where the woman is assumed to have attributes that make her an instrument of social cohesion. The saying *Umugore ni gahuza miryango*, meaning, 'a woman serves as a bridge between families and tribes' expresses Rwandans' belief in the idea that a woman is a mediator or a bridge-builder between extended families, clans, tribes and neighbours. The tradition then assumes that women are endowed with the capacity to restore broken relationships and create long-lasting friendships with the members of different groups. *Umugore ni nyina w'Imana* (a woman is a mother of God) is another adage which refers to her compassion as that of God. In terms of conflict resolution, the saying expresses the role of a mother in maintaining stability and peace in the family, as God does in the creation.

John Paul Lederach (1995) observes a similar tradition in Mexican culture. He notices that there is no specific vocabulary that defines the term 'conflict'. They use the word *desmadre* which translates 'disorder' or 'chaos'. The term, however, does not stand for conflict but literally, the term means to be 'without a mother'. Lederach attracts the attention of the reader by commenting that the metaphor of *desmadre* as conflict does not refer to the absence of the father, but to the situation of the more total and devastating disintegration that emerges without the presence of a mother. Lederach believes therefore that practically, this raises a clearer understanding of the central role of women in the resolution of the family conflicts in the Latin American context. According to Lederach, this term highlights two major things about women: their significant natural inclination for resolving conflicts and their key conciliatory role in maintaining harmony among people (Lederach 1995:75-76).

However, I argue that women have a tendency to avoid conflict not because they are genetically programmed to be more pacific than men but because of reasons related to their vulnerability. While women may appear to be more pacific than men, their conciliatory stance arises from the consequences that many of them suffer from conflict, whether physically and emotionally. Further, sometimes, apart from physical suffering because of being at risk of mutilation, murder, and exploitation, they also undergo psychological problems when they are obliged to carry unwanted pregnancies and to take care of unwanted children as the result of rape. Khaminwa concurs with this observation by adding that in times of peace, women make up the majority of people at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, and the environment of conflict places them in even more jeopardy. She observes that even inflation and the scarcity of necessary items such as food and medicine places them at a greater risk of malnourishment, starvation, chronic disease, and death (Kaminwa and Cate 2004:10).

Reardon points to another reason in trying to explain why some women appear more disposed to be peacemakers than men - because they are considered life-givers. According to Reardon, women bring forth life and carry a great deal of responsibility for maintaining it (Reardon 1993:23). Women then may be more pro-peace than men because of their socialization rather than their genetic make-up. The combination of their vulnerability and their role in life-giving and life-sustaining socializes them, along with cultural traditions, to be peace-makers.

This research however, neither aims at proving that women are more apt to be peacemakers than men, nor focuses on women because of their assumed natural or inner qualities as being peacemakers or peace-builders. Simply, I believe that being part of the society, women also need to be part of its building; they should not be excluded. When women are given opportunities to utilize their abilities, they can be as good a manager of conflict in their communities as men, sometimes even better. But it was noticed above that the static structural functionalist model of conflict resolution does not take sufficient account of the social change that can transform and promote the interests of all the

members of the community as a whole. Failure to challenge old traditions has been one of the handicaps for women's participation in the development of their communities.

The present work therefore strives to adopt theories of conflict resolution that would help to awaken the spirit, for creating a moral conscience, promoting conditions for a peaceful world by fighting against injustice, inequality and exclusion, as well as promoting respect for human rights for everyone regardless of their gender. As discussed before, the combination of conflict theory with the biblical theory of conflict resolution will help to bridge the gap by its inclusive capacity of allowing even women to operate in their community by challenging the structures of traditions and gender barriers. More hands are then necessary for effective work because as it is expressed by an old saying, where conflicts are concerned, just as in case of illness, prevention is better than cure. Hygiene is always preferable to chemotherapy. Even though in our current situation in Rwanda it is not prevention, the role of women may contribute to the cure as well as the prevention of conflict for other generations.

The process of dealing with reconciliation in Rwanda after the tragedy of genocide is crucial to this research work. Much research has been done in this area but there has been little focus on the potential of the biblical text to facilitate transformation and reconciliation in an ongoing situation of conflict. I concur with this statement from those who are not aware of the depth of Rwandan problems that, "It can be argued that there is peace in Rwanda but not reconciliation…Rwanda is not yet free from the dark cloud brought about by genocide: it will take longer than a decade to eradicate the division of race, caste and class and to fully establish democratic structures…" (Fuller and May 2006:6). If Rwandan women are motivated and allowed to contribute freely to this role of peacemaking and reconciliation, there will be hope for a better future for the country, even if it is a complex and long-term process which has to deal with traumatic memories by whatever means are available (Fuller and May 2006:7). In this process, this thesis hopes that Rwandans may draw on the rich resources of John's Gospel for inspiration and direction. Before the exegesis of the biblical text, we need to examine the plight of

women from their context, both the Mediterranean regional culture of the first century and the Rwandan culture. We start with the context of Rwanda.

3.8 Summary

This chapter briefly discussed some scholarly theories on conflict and reconciliation, with the aim of identifying a theory or an approach to conflict resolution which may be adopted by the present work. The chapter considered the meaning of some terms which are crucial to this work, among them the term "conflict". Some theories, such as equilibrium theory, deny the existence of conflict in the community. Others, including conflict theory, believe not only in the existence of conflict in all communities, but view it as an inevitable and even necessary part of life. Conflict theorists believe that conflict only becomes problematic when it generates negative side effects in the community. It was also seen how the theory of structural functionalism maintains the structures existing in the community without objecting to the oppression and exclusion they may perpetrate.

After this brief examination of theories of conflict management, I chose to combine the conflict approach and the biblical approach. Because of my experience with the pain and damage caused by conflict, I prefer an approach which recognizes and deals with pain and which can help to transcend the causes of conflict so that people can live together in a new way. Adopting the combined theory may help to maximize the advantages of each approach. While the conflict approach recognizes the existence of conflict, the biblical approach provides the way to deal with the conflict and the pain it causes, especially by opening the door for forgiveness, which enables to overcome revenge. I believe that the combination of these approaches can provide a tool for lasting reconciliation as it may help those affected by the conflict to come together in a restored relationship. This combined approach may not only to help those struggling with the side effects of conflict through hatred, trauma and disassociation to be able to forgive, but it may also help the perpetrators of recognize their role in causing conflict. The present work endeavours to involve women in the act of reconciliation by accepting to be mediators. However, I am aware that Rwandan women are carrying the side effects of conflict. The applicability of

this new approach is expected to help Rwandan women to forgive, and seek to be forgiven before engaging in the act of reconciliation.

The next step engages in an examination of the plight and participation of Rwandan women in peacemaking. This will be done through a study of the Rwandan context.

CHAPTER 4:   ANALYSIS OF THE RWANDAN CONTEXT AND WOMEN'S PLIGHT AND ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

4.0 Introduction

This study follows a contextual approach to the Fourth Gospel that is expected to challenge Rwandan women with respect to their role in building peace and reconciliation. Because the selected texts from the Gospel of John will be read and interpreted from the perspective of women in Rwanda, it is the context of women in Rwanda that will provide questions to put to the texts.[23] It is therefore necessary to study the Rwandan context first, in order to approach the biblical texts with an understanding of the Rwandan social situation. In this chapter, the Rwandan context and the plight of Rwandan women with their role in the community are discussed in terms of the Inculturation Hermeneutic developed by Ukpong.[24]

At the phenomenological level, issues in the Rwandan context against which the selected texts are to be interpreted are identified, specifically the contribution of women in promoting peace and unity in the community. The socio-anthropological aspect analysis will consider the worldview of the Rwandan people with respect to the role of women in the society in general and their contribution in peace-building in particular. The historical analysis will help to investigate the issue in relation to history, looking into the ways the Rwandan women have contributed to peace-building, and their successes and challenges in this respect throughout Rwandan history. The social analysis will be concerned with the contribution of Rwandan women toward the social life and development of the nation. Apart from the first level, all the other levels of analysis of the Rwandan context will include the examination of the plight and place of women in the society. To understand this context, a description of the general setting of the country will be presented first.

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[23] This chapter will use the exetensive literature written on the Rwandan context. Indeed there are not many works produced by Rwandan women; but the few which are available will be complemented by those produced by Rwanda males. However, the study will also use other books produced by the friends of Rwanda, that is, those who visited or interviwed Rwandans. Further more, being a Rwandan woman who was born and grew up in Rwanda, my experience will be able to bridge the possible gaps that may appear in the foreingers' writings.

[24] The levels or stages of the Inculturation hermeneutic for analyzing the context suggested by Ukpong and their application to Rwandan context are discussed in detail in the second chapter.

4.1 General setting of Rwanda

This section presents a brief description of Rwanda, its geographical location, physical, economic and demographic situation. This description aims at helping in the understanding of the Rwandan society and the environment surrounding Rwandan women.

4.1.1 Physical setting

Present-day Rwanda is a mountainous landlocked country located in the heart of Africa, bordered by Uganda in the north, separated from Tanzania in the east by the Akagera River, from Burundi in the south by the Akanyaru River and from the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire) in the west by Kivu Lake and Rusizi River. As d'Hertefelt has observed, the current shape of Rwanda resulted from various conquests of ancient kings before the occupation of Belgians and Germans who mistakenly called the country "Ruanda" (d'Hertefelt and Scherve 1962:15). Rwanda is renowned for its natural beauty. Explorers described Rwanda as "a land of almost ideal beauty; the Switzerland of Africa, the pearl of Africa" (Lemarchand 1970:13; Melvern 2000:7; Bale 2002:11). Even though these explorers may be exaggerating, one undisputed attraction to outsiders besides Rwandan natural beauty is in the stability of its climate.

4.1.2 Climate of Rwanda

Rwanda is often referred to as "the Land of Thousand Hills", *le Pays des Milles Collines*. The highest mountains are the volcanoes[25] on the north-west of the country. Located in the Great Lakes region, the country has twenty-eight lakes (Melvern 2000:7). Of the nine largest lakes, six are located within its territory and three others are shared with the neighbouring countries. Rwanda is located near the equator[26] but despite this location, the high altitude moderates its climate. Rwanda enjoys a very pleasant climate with an

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[25] Melvern provides detail about the situation of those volcanoes and their altitude. From west to east, Rwanda is divided into six topographical regions: the narrow Great Rift Valley, the volcanic Virunga mountains with the highest peak Karisimbi (4,532m or 14,870 ft), the Zaire-Nile Divide with the average of 40 km (25m) width which extends to the region of the north-south with an average elevation of 2,750 m or 9000 ft. There is also the central plateau east which is made of rolling hills, and at the southern area there are savannas and swamps which include the vast Akagera National Park (Melvern 2000:7)

[26] It lies between latitude 1º and 3º south and longitude 29º and 31º east.

average annual temperature of 18º C, and has 900 to 1,600 mm of rainfall per year, according to altitude (Prunier 1995:2).

The country has four seasons in the year which are divided according to the rain levels. From October to November there is the short rainy season while the main one lasts from mid-March to the end of May. The dry seasons are from December to mid-March and from June to the end of August respectively. Three percent of Rwandan land is covered by forest, especially the "tropical rainforest at the higher and the water altitude in the west" (Waller 1996). Generally the major benefit of this forest is its contribution to the weather Rwandans enjoy. The government has a great task to protect the forest in the face of an ever-growing demand for land from peasant farmers. Moreover, because of the surface covered by forests, Rwanda has a variety of animals such as lions, elephants, and gorillas, which contribute to tourism.

4.1.3 Economic situation

Despite the exterior impression of lushness and prosperity, Rwanda is among the poorest countries in Africa despite her abundantly fertile soil. This is due to various factors, one of which is overpopulation. The economy of the country remains almost exclusively based on agriculture, and most of the Rwandan population lives on agriculture. Thus, due to population pressure, every available piece of the land is used to produce mainly food crops. Yet these crops are grown just to meet the needs of domestic consumption. Despite the extremely fertile land, the efforts and the emphasis on agriculture, the production fails to keep pace with the increase in population. Rwandan agriculture has not progressed beyond the subsistence level.

One needs to recall the damage caused by the famines of 1916 and 1943. These caused an alarming number of deaths and migration to the neighbouring countries (Lemarchand 1970:14). But the problem was not only in the past. Presently, some people, especially from the rural areas, go hungry and are malnourished. There is a paucity of natural resources in the country: the only important cash crop is coffee (of Arabica variety), first introduced by the Belgians in 1936 under compulsory cultivation. The other commercial

crops - insignificant in terms of quantity - are tea, cotton and pyrethrum. The mining sector is also almost nonexistent. The resources available are not sufficient to meet the needs of the Rwandan people. This competition for land and scarce resources heightens the underlying of divisions in Rwandan society and intensifies existing conflicts.

4.1.4 The population of Rwanda

As mentioned earlier the high rate of growth of the Rwandan population is challenge to the country. Rwanda is classified among the most overpopulated[27] countries of Africa.

4.1.4.1 The Rwandan social groups

Rwandan history is intertwined with the origin of its inhabitants, made up of three social groups namely: Twa, Tutsi and Hutu. The Twa are very few in number, more or less one percent of the population. They lived in the forest as hunter-gatherers, or else served the high-ranking personalities and the King in a variety of menial tasks. The Twa are a group of people who have been exploited and driven out of their land. This group shares the problem of most aboriginal peoples around the world. They depended on a hunter-gather economy, which was destroyed by settler farming. Marginalized by other ethnic groups and under extreme pressure economically, their situation seldom attracts the attention of writers on Rwanda.

A second group, identified as "Hutu", makes up the vast majority of the population. Traditionally they are described as farmers who cultivated the soil. According to Prunier, the Hutu have typical 'Bantu' features very much identical to most of Bantu people living in neighbouring countries (Prunier 1995:6). In the third group are the Tutsi, who are less in number than the Hutu. Tutsi were traditionally known as cattle-rearers and sometimes

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[27] The data provided by the *Politique Nationale de Santé* in July 2003 shows that the population size was 8 128,553 people, comprising 3 879,448 males and 4 249,105 females. The majority of the population (88.6%) lives by agriculture and is consentrated mostly in the rural area. The remaining 11.4% are distributed across other services, such as specialized workers in the civil service, business and trade industries. The total rural population is 83.1% while the urban population is 16%. The ever-growing population carries with it a number of problems, including a negative impact on the economy. The scarcity of the resources needed for the subsistence of the whole population has been a factor responsible for the social conflicts that divide the Rwandan society and antagonize social groups – a society that otherwise shares much in common, as history shows.

differentiated by their physical features. The three Rwandan social groups are commonly referred to as tribes although the basis for that qualification is not clear. All three share the same territory; they stay together, share the same religion, the same ancestral stories, speak the same language, eat the same food, and are united in one culture. Theories explaining the origin of these social groups remain inconclusive.

The origin of these three groups is problematic and remains a contested mystery in Rwandan history. This is partly because Rwandan pre-colonial history was not written and was rather recalled in poems and myths orally transmitted from generation to generation, until the late nineteenth century when the first European arrived in Rwanda and was able to write about the country of his discovery. A wide-spread Rwandan myth suggests that Gihanga, the first king and "founder" of Rwanda, had three sons namely, Gatwa, the ancestor of the Twa, Gahutu, the ancestor of Hutu and Gatutsi the ancestor of Tutsi. According to this myth, the three groups came from the same ancestor who inhabited the country. This myth, therefore, stresses the kinship and solidarity of the three ethnic groups. However, this myth which emphasized kinship and solidarity was later on overcame by some theories which stress divisions among the Rwandan social groups.

Rwanda became known to the western world in the late nineteenth century when the first European, a German count, Gustav Adolf von Gotzen, was received at court by King Rwabugiri on 4 May 1894 (Melvern 2000:7). The written history from this time reflects the labyrinth of theories and ideas of the Western world about Rwanda, recorded according to their domain of interest. Some of the root of conflicts between Rwandans can be traced to these ambiguous stories, especially in terms of their origin. Basing his research on archaeology and discoveries of the neighbouring countries, Muzungu claims that Rwanda was inhabited at least since the seventh century before Jesus Christ (Muzungu 2003:10). However, Muzungu's findings do not provide any clear information about the now debated issue of the order of settlement of the Rwandan social groups.

The most prominent hypothesis suggests that the Twa were the first to arrive in the area, then Hutu followed and Tutsi arrived last. The first group, the Batwa, is believed to have

arrived between 2000 BC and 1000 AD when people migrated in successive waves into the area between the Rift Valley lakes of central Africa. The Batwa were referred to as *Abasangwabutaka,* meaning "those found in the land". For the next 500 years, new people – the Hutu - migrated into the area. They concentrated on clearing the land for cultivation. They were organized in small monarchies based on clans of related families. As stated above, the Hutu are believed to be descended from the Bantu family because they share the same typical Bantu features with those from neighbouring countries, Uganda and Tanzania (Melvern 2000:8; Lemarchand 1970:8; Prunier 1995:5). However, there is no other indication that they came from those countries. The Tutsi, around fifteen percent of the population, were cattle-herders. According to Waller (1996:4), they arrived on Rwanda territory between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Waller 1996:4). Fegley calculates that they may have entered the area in the fourteenth or fifteenth century from the northeast (Fegley 1993:xix; Melvern 2000:8).

Given the absence of consensus among historians and anthropologists, the origins of Rwandan social groups remains obscure and different theories of origins have been at the basis of exclusivist ideologies that fuelled conflicts in Rwanda. At the time Rwanda was "discovered" by the first Westerners, the Hamitic theory, initiated by the explorer John H. Speke, was supported. This theory suggested different origins for the three social groups. Speke asserted that the Tutsi were a branch of the *Hima*. He contended that, judging from the physical appearance of the *Wahima* (i.e. Hima[28]), they could not be of any other race than the semi-Shem-Hamitic people of Ethiopia. The Hima descended from the Gala (Oromo), the cattle-raising nomadic branch of Ethipoia. The key elements were preconceived or speculative, based on the alleged resemblance of Galla-Oromo and Hima-Tutsi (Turner 2007:53). The Tutsi were then described as a 'foreign caste' of cattle rearers recognizable by their fine features (Turner 2007:227-254). Their physical features, spoken languages and other cultural characteristics distinguished them from

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[28] People known as Bahima coming from the Hima group are a branch of Tutsi. But all the Tutsi people are not from the Hima group. This tiny group was living in a part of Mutara in the north-east of the country. They had a nomadic life and lived only from milk -; they were not cultivating - while other Tutsi people lived on agriculture though their servants were the ones cultivating. However, there were also Tutsi who were poor and could not have servants. It appears that Westerners who do not have a full understanding of Rwandan social groups promote false information, and in some cases create confusion for their readers and even problems among the population.

those called Bantu (Rutayisire 2005:24). The Hamitic/Semitic hypothesis promoted the superiority of Tutsi people saying that Tutsis are superior beings of a good race which does not have anything of the Negro, apart from the colour. These hypotheses also claimed that Tutsi are gifted with a vivacious intelligence and they are natural-born leaders (Prunier 1995:6).

The Hamitic hypothesis initiated by Speke became popular from the early phase of the colonization of Rwanda. The theory suggested that any form of civilization seen in Africa was the work of the Hamitic population who were allegedly of Caucasian origin and who had immigrated into (Sub-Sahara) Africa through North Africa. Such an argument denied that black Africans were capable of creating any viable political, social, technical or advanced cultural organization. More harmful to social unity was the ideological distinction between the Hamites and the Bantu, a distinction that made the Hamites a superior race fit to lead and the Bantu an inferior race born to serve. Gatwa[29] argues that until the 1960s, the prevalent scholarship on Rwanda supported the explorers' and colonizers' theories of Hamite monarchy, pitting the 'lords of the thousand hills' the Batutsi against their vassals, the Bahutu (Gatwa 2005:5-6). In identifying the Tutsi as Hamites, the Hamitic theory rendered them alien, not belonging to Rwanda, while the Hutu were surmised to be more connected to the land. These hypotheses gave rise to claims to inequalities of rights, resulting in tensions and hostilities among Rwandans. Mamdani describes the situation:

> The origin of the violence is connected to how Hutu and Tutsi were constructed as political identities by the colonial state, Hutu as indigenous and Tutsi as alien. The reason for continued violence between Hutu and Tutsi, I argue, is connected with the failure of Rwandan nationalism to transcend the colonial construction of Hutu and Tutsi as native and alien (Mamdani 2001:34).

The contribution of colonial power in constructing Rwandan social and economic categories, often described as ethnic groups, shaped the life of the country so that the great part of Rwandan history revolves around the relations among its social groups. This

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[29] Gatwa Tharcisse is a Rwandan who made a significant contribution to the Rwandan church. He served in the leadership, and worked as the Director of the Bible Society in Rwanda from 1983-94.

pertains too, to the role and place of women in Rwandan society. Rwandan women already had roles in society before the arrival of the European colonizers. The next section examines their contribution to the life of the nation during the pre-colonial period.

4.2 Place and role of women in Rwandan pre-colonial society

Pre-colonial Rwanda, like many African countries, had a patriarchal society where women were given limited opportunity to actively participate in some spheres of life. Nevertheless, there are women who are remembered for their influential roles in such important domains as politics and religion. There are many who significantly contributed to the life of their community although their role was not always noticed and duly recognized. The pre-colonial Rwandan socio-political structure did not make it easy for women to emerge.

4.2.1 Socio-political background of pre-colonial Rwanda

Rwandan society was basically feudal in character. This was especially so after the Tutsi monarchy took over from Hutu regimes of *Abahinza.* Before the spread of Tutsi rule, the Hutu were organized politically under structures with kings called *Abahinza.*[30] *Umuhinza* was responsible of the fertility of the land (de Heusch 1966:72) and ruled alongside his mother like the Tutsi king did later. The Bahinza were later on conquered by Tutsi kings, *Abami,* who instituted a feudal regime called *Ubuhake.* This institution stressed relationships among individuals involving ties of obedience and protection which bound a servant to his master (Lemarchand 1970:18).

Umwami[31] (king) lived at the center of a large court and was treated like a divine being. He was surrounded by royal ritualists called *Abiru*. He was believed to possess a sacred power and physically embodied Rwanda. Prunier reports an incident of a white explorer who shook the hands of the king without his permission and all the courtiers were terrified believing that such an act would result in an earthquake (Prunier 1995:8). *Umwami* owned everything: the land, the cattle, and people. The symbol of his authority

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[30] *Umuhinza* is known as a Hutu king in Rwandan history.
[31] *Umwami* means king in singular while *abami* is the plural.

was a sacred drum called *Kalinga.*[32] Traditionally, he was believed to be a father and the patriarch of his people, given to them by *Imana* (God); he was also believed to be infallible and the saviour of his territory. He was the rain-giver and its controller in his kingdom. His authority and decisions could never be questioned.

Pre-colonial Rwanda was dominated by the male leadership of *Umwami* and his chiefs. Under his leadership were other subdivisions: provinces, districts and hills. The provinces were managed by high chiefs but the borders of the country were under the protection of the army chiefs. The districts were supervised by two chiefs; there was a land chief in charge of agricultural levies and a cattle chief whose duty was to collect cattle taxes. The hills were administered by hill chiefs responsible for landholdings, taxation and grazing rights. Each of these layers of hierarchy was linked in a relationship of mutual dependence based on *ubuhake* (clientship).

The cow was the main subject of *ubuhake,* it was the supreme reward the servant expected from his master. But *ubuhake* was not limited to the cow as a simple token; it involved more obligations and responsibilities from both sides. Melvern observes that *ubuhake* referred to a contractual service in which a more powerful person could provide protection in exchange for work; most often the patron was Tutsi (Melvern 2000:9). *Ubuhake* involved more than just an economic transaction between an inferior and a superior, it involved even a kind of indirect possession of the inferior by the patron. As Lemarchand has noted:

> Clientship involved a close personal relationship, in some ways reminiscent of ties of fealty which linked the medieval lord to his vassal. The reciprocal bonds of loyalty between client and patron meant that one became the other's 'man' ….In return for this act of homage the patron owed protection to his client in every circumstance of life (Lemarchand 1970:36).

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[32] *Kalinga* was a sacred drum on which nobody ever drummed. There were other ordinary drums for any other purpose. *Kalinga* was decorated with genitals of slain enemies that had been conquered.

This pre-colonial socio-political system was however very far from being stable. The relationship between the patron and the client could be terminated at anytime if for some reasons the patron was not satisfied by the service.

All the leaders under Umwami leadership were appointed by Umwami and they were only men. This had impact on women, who were not welcome to hold any prominent position in this patriarchal society. The social structure enshrined the male's dominance and the woman's subordination. Women were not allowed to participate in public decision-making; they were not allowed to speak or to take any decision in traditional courts. Rwandan culture, however, had some positive tendencies that reserved respect to women in social life as well as in leadership. Despite undeniable gender inequalities, certain women succeeded in asserting a form of authority. In politics, the queen and the queen-mother had a strong influence on the king, thus holding significant power in a male-dominated society.

4.2.2 Queen and queen-mother in Rwandan politics

The queen-mother's leadership was accorded proportionate value with that of her son and was considered to be complementary and indispensable. In fact, the presence of the queen-mother, *Umugabekazi,* was not only considered very important but essential for the success of the king's life and reign. One European, observing the pivotal participation of Rwandan queen-mothers in the leadership, believed that the country was in reality ruled by females. In Taylor's estimate, "As many Rwandan kings assumed their function at a tender age, in reality the king ruled in conjunction with a queen-mother. Rwandan queen-mothers were often politically prominent and this prompted some early European explorers to speak of Rwanda as a territory ruled by queens" (Taylor 1999:179).

The queen-mother was a power figure in her own right at the *Mwami'*s court. While she lived at court, she had her own lands, herds of cattle, and clients (Longman 2006:134). The roles of the queen-mother extended to various domains; she was a counsellor and power behind the throne of her son; she was a protector of the "heir" to the throne and manager of the household. Normally the king and queen-mother came from different

clans. If the king in power died suddenly, the future king was sometimes a baby and had to be hidden for a long time so that he would not be killed by the opposition - the people from other clans who also aspired to get onto the throne. It was therefore the role of the queen-mother to take the risks of protecting the baby-king from any harm.
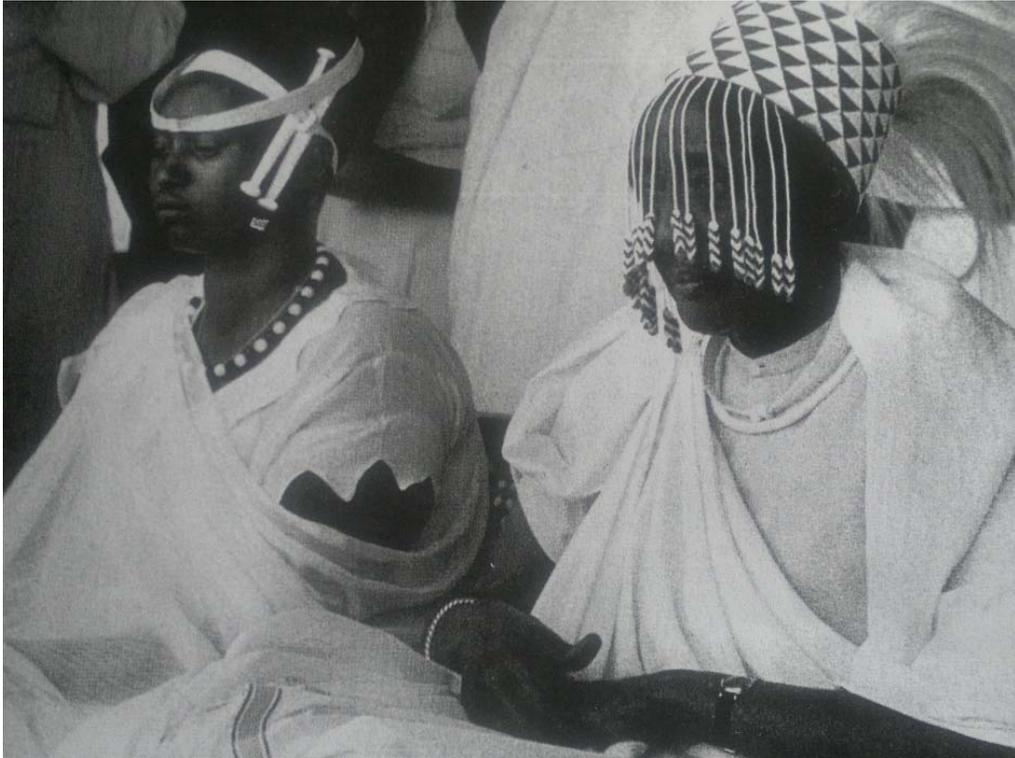
Figure 1: The Rwandan King and the Queen sitting together
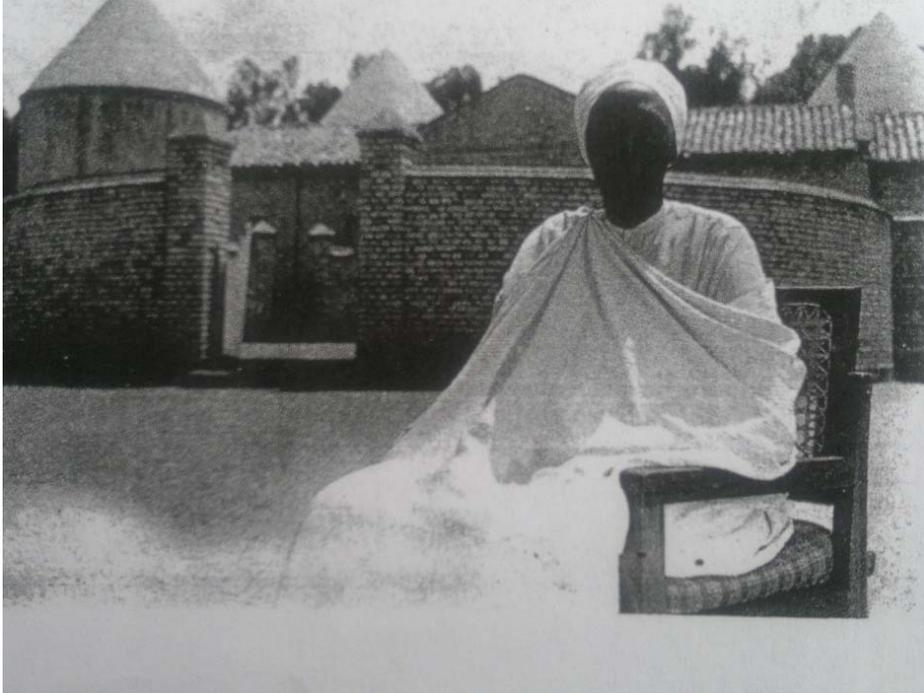
Figure 2: The queen-mother who ruled alongside her son.[33]

The queen-mother ruled along with her son and shared all the royal prerogatives with him. Depending on the regions however, she was not supposed to be present at the public royal court when the king was giving official orders. It was not culturally allowed for a woman to be present in a public place with men in that manner. But in some other regions, she was required to sit with her son at the royal court and even travel with him. It was recognized and officially approved in the esoteric code (*ubwiru)* that the queen-mother was officially a co-ruler with her son. Having closely observed what was happening at the royal court, Maquet and Bourgeois remarked that the kingship was realized by two personages at the same time without any division of tasks or privileges (Maquet 1954:148; Bourgeois 1953:53). Turner goes even further asserting that theoretically, all power was concentrated in the hands of the king, but in reality the queen-mother and her brothers monopolized it, as in the case with King Musinga (Turner

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[33] These pictures were produced by Jacques Maquet (1957:51) in his book *Rwanda: Essai photographique sur une société en transition*. Bruxelles: Elsevier. The picture explains the system of leadership by the king with his mother. Practically the kingship was realized by two persons, the king and the queen-mother. As Maquet explains, the above king was leading the country under the control of Belgian administration (Maquet 1957:50).

2007:60). However, she exercised her responsibilities as long as her son was living; when the king died she would also lose all her power.

It was not only the queen-mothers who participated actively in pre-colonial Rwandan leadership; the queens, the kings' wives, played an important role. Most known is the case of Queen Nyiramuhumuza[34] King Rwabugiri's wife who was a prominent female figure. After the death of her husband in 1895, Nyiramuhumuza continued with her husband's vision of leadership. She wanted to conquer the north of Rwanda, the very vision her husband had always had, but ultimately she could not successfully realize this vision. Her plan was sabotaged by colonizers who had just arrived in the country and who were frustrated by her leadership that opposed their interests. Because of the opposition of the colonizers, she was compelled to flee from Rwanda to Uganda. She took shelter in the rugged mountains of the north. But she was renowned for her courage:

> Herself (Nyiramuhumuza) an outstanding personality, possessing great powers of leadership and organization, and far more brains than probably any Tutsi woman, she was in intelligence quite up to standards of her late husband…. Not only in intelligence but in ambition: in 1911 she proclaimed herself Queen of Ndorwa and promised her followers that she would soon liberate the country from the yoke of Europeans (Mamdani 2001:72).

Sadly, Queen Nyiramuhumuza was captured by German authorities in 1911 in Bufumbira Uganda where she was in exile. Her son Ndungutse, viewed by the local population as the saviour who would liberate them from the servitude of the corveé (*uburetwa*), was killed by Germans troops in 1912 (Mamdani 2001:72).

Beside queens and queen-mothers, ordinary women also had an impact on Rwandan society, mostly through their influence on men's activities. Culturally and traditionally, women were influential in various aspects of Rwandan society despite its patriarchal structure. Always wise men valued and appreciated the support of their wives, which was even more needed in times of war. Though women were not openly and officially

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[34] For some scholars, especially non-Rwandan scholars, Nyiramuhumuza is known as Muhumuza in their books.

promoted in a society dominated by male power, they were respected as being the essence of life in the society. They were considered as the source of life, prosperity and unity in the society and even viewed as having strong power and force in everyday life.

Rwandan women were not allowed to go to battle but they were sometimes viewed as holding power for winning the battle. Whenever a king was going into battle, his mother or his wife would sit on a particular seat, until the battle was over. This practice is referred to as *kwicara ku ntebe y'inteko* (sitting in the seat of power). The mother would then hold her breast, *gufata iry'iburyo,* as a sign of protection for her husband or son on the battlefield. This was applied not only to the king but to any commander of an army who was going into the battle. His wife was required to sit on a particular seat as a way of protecting her husband and increasing his power to win. Women were also respected because of the powerful position they held within the Rwandan spiritual beliefs, that is the religious realm.

4.2.3 Women's influence in religion

Women's power was disclosed through Rwandan beliefs. Women were associated with powerful spiritual forces which could have a very serious impact on the nation both positively and negatively. In the northern part of Rwanda, in the region of Kiga, there was a prominent spirit called *Nyabingi* which was identified as a feminine divinity. *Nyabingi* is believed to have existed before the colonial era and continued during King Rwabugiri's time through to the colonial era. She is thought to be a historical figure who ruled the region of Ndorwa-Kajara and who even after her death continued to issue decrees through the mouth of her priestesses, the *Bagirwa* who are almost invariably women (Mamdani 2001:296; Lemarchand 1970:100-101; Nkulikiyinka 2006:5).

Nyabingi was also believed to work miracles, to bring about fertility to women and prosperity to men. But she would wreak vengeance on her enemies and would be merciless when disregarded and not respected. She was believed to be the queen of Ndorwa and thus, any seekers of health or of power, used to visit that region presenting their request to *Nyabingi*. The people of her territory composed poems and songs that

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expressed their honour and respect to her, praising her as a leader of the whole territory, provider of prosperity, the refuge of the poor (Freedman 1984:45-47). The north region, *Nyabingi*'s territory, is claimed to have been protected against colonizers and enemies for years. *Nyabingi* repelled King Rwabugiri and other kings who attacked her region. It is even believed that Nyiramuhumuza had problems with the German colonizers because of *Nyabingi*.[35] *Nyabingi* was presented as a female hero of her time in Rwandan history and was considered to be the power behind wealth and prosperity in the community. This contributed to the promotion of respect for women in that domain (Freedman 1984:48).

The fear of the spirit of *Nyabingi* and her influence in the northern part, and even on the whole of Rwanda, is still felt today. Besides the few prominent women whose exceptional power was recognized and their names remembered in history, Rwandan in general women contributed significantly to the life of the society. This applies especially to their contribution to the economy.

4.2.4 Women's contribution to the Rwandan economy

Traditionally, an ideal Rwandan woman was a wife capable of producing children (especially male children), and able to contribute to the activities that promote the prosperity of her family. It was confirmed by the report produced by Ministry of Gender and Promotion of Women (Ministère du Genre et de la Promotion de la Femme, MIGEPROFE) that throughout history the Rwandan traditional patriarchal society has confined women to domestic and family roles and responsibilities. That report argues that this differentiation has contributed to limiting Rwandan women's access to resources and participation in decisions concerning Rwandan development (Sanam 2003:25). Women were very much involved in various work of producing food crops but they were not allowed to own their own properties as everything belonged to their husbands. Any contribution from a woman was to pass through him. By implication, throughout

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[35] Nyiramuhumuza's problems with colonizers are believed to have been caused by the intervention of *Nyabingi* because she wanted to interfere with her kingdom in the north. The northern part, Kiga region, stayed for many years without Europeans and other conquests; this is attributed to the protection of the strong force of *Nyabingi*.

Rwandan history, the positive work of economic development done by women was attributed to the husband (Lame 2005: 24, 25).

Women were renowned as the ones who played a pivotal role in the management of household resources. As the economy was based on agriculture, the economic situation of Rwandan women was fundamentally centred on agricultural production. However, before and during the colonial rule, and even years prior to the genocide, the agriculture and the livestock, specifically cattle, were the foundation of the traditional riches of the country. Women were significantly involved in the care of these resources but could not take any decisions about the livestock because it was the exclusive property of the husband (Sandrart 1951:48).

Culturally women were viewed as agents of prosperity in Rwandan society, as Lame observed. This was linked to their role of productivity and fertility in terms of the land. They were considered as vehicles for socio-mystical forces that they drew from their father's lineage. The cultural role was mostly linked to farmwomen whose labour and reproductive power had close ties with the fertility of the soil. Women were believed to be in special relationship with the land. Lame also argues that traditionally, there was a mystical tie between women and the fertility of the land. The relationship was expressed through their husbands. Peasant women spoke through their husband's discourse because without the shadow of a male, women's words would not be very effective (Lame 2005:438). The value of the land is emphasized because, as mentioned earlier, the land is source of Rwandan life as its economy is based on agriculture on which Rwandans live.

Traditionally, it was believed that it was the woman's domestic contribution that made the land fruitful. Aloys Bigirumwami, the renowned Rwandan anthropologist, argues that women were reputed to have the power to stop tragedies that prevented good harvests and storms that damaged the crops. When a storm started, a woman would scream telling it to stop. If the storm persisted, she would use a particular object, like the sword of her husband, to perform acts normally done by a man, and the storm would eventually cease.

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However, while a woman was able to prevent a tragedy, she could also be its source (Bigirumwamwi 1984:54).

Just as most women's power was only expressed through their husbands, women had power to fertilize the soil only if they were married. The worst, as Nkulikiyinka confirms, is that unwedded pregnant girls or non-menstruating mature girls represented a threat to the fertility of the land and people of their families, as well as extended families. Such women were marginalized, even banned or killed in order to remove the curse from the family and the community (Nkulikiyinka 2006:24). Even though some suffered such marginalization and abuse, women were viewed as key players in various sectors of the society. These included the areas of harmony and unity in Rwandan community.

4.2.5 Women as agents of unity in pre-colonial Rwanda from the perspective of marriage

Besides leadership, prosperity and fertility roles, women were also considered to be agents of unity. The terminology of *peacemaking* and *reconciliation* which are often used when speaking about Rwanda today could not be found in any written material about Rwanda before the year 1994. This terminology emerged in writings about Rwanda after the severe conflicts exploded into the genocide, a tragedy which caught the attention of the whole world and attracted outsiders to write on these themes. However, the Rwandan vernacular, the *Kinyarwanda,* had its own terms referring to the concepts of reconciliation and peacemaking. The adage[36] *umugore ni gahuzamiryango* (a girl is a bridge-builder between families) includes the verb *guhuza* meaning *to unite or* to reconcile and the word *imiryango* that refers to families, clans, tribes, neighbours and so on. Depending on the context, the saying may refer to a situation of broken relationships. Because traditionally women are seen as best mediators in restoring broken relationships, the adage means that giving one's daughter in marriage to another family strengthens the ties of friendship between the two families and their extended relatives. Even if the

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[36] Some of these adages will be repeated throughout this work because of the emphasis they make. For instance some of them are already given in the introduction and motivation of this work and others are discussed in the chapter on theories of reconciliation.

families were estranged before, the presence of the married daughter could change the situation and built harmonious relationships.

The Rwandan girl is therefore not supposed to be a child of only her biological family; she belongs to the whole society. This is the meaning of the proverb, *umukobwa ni nyampinga,* mentioned earlier (chapter one). Marriage is then conceived as a sacred event in the community, not an issue concerning only two families. Concurring with the bridge-building aspect of marriage, Kalibwami observes that, *Le mariage était, dans une large mesure, l'affaire de toute la grande famille. Il scellait l'union et l'alliance des familles de deux conjoints* (Mariage was, to a great extent, an issue involving the whole extended family. It sealed the union and the alliance between the families of the two spouses) (Kalibwami 1991:67).

The bridge-building ability attributed to Rwandan women appears also in the adage *umukobwa ntagira ubwoko* (a woman, or girl, does not belong to any particular ethnic group). The perception was that the girl's ethnic identity was not fixed but could be defined by the family into which she was to be married. Traditionally, this flexible ethnic identity enabled women to be bridge-builders and agents of unity in the society. They bridged the gap created by politics of ethnicity and exclusion. The saying *umukobwa ni nyampinga,* as already mentioned in chapter one, reflects the same thinking. It meant that Rwandan girls are those who provide for travellers despite their ethnic groups or their regions. The term *umukobwa* (young girl) has the meaning of a female person, which expresses the praise of respect and affection (Muzungu 2003:138). The saying captures the thought that weary travellers from distant hills or villages, who happened to be visiting or passing through, could expect to enjoy warm hospitality far from their homes whenever they meet women born in their villages who have been married into those far places. The travellers were then taken care of regardless of their kinship or regions. The mere fact that the woman recognizes the travellers to be from her own village should be enough for her to accommodate them as she would for her own family.

Besides enjoying a flexible ethnic identity, women could play a peacemaking role between their husbands or sons and the neighbours in time of conflict by performing certain cultural practices (see chapter one). Bigirumwami points out that the wife or mother could stop the husband or her son from fighting by the act of locking the gate with her traditional belt which the husband or son could not cross to go and fight. By this act the woman could stop them from going to fight neighbours or to engage in unnecessary battle (Bigirumwami 1984: 43). If they persisted, it was believed that they would eventually suffer severe consequences, even death, as Sandrart has noted: *Il suffit qu'une mère dispose sa ceinture au travers du chemin de son fils pour que celui-ci ne puisse la franchir sous peine de commettre le plus horrible des sacrilèges* (by her simple act of placing her belt across the way before her son was enough to prevent the son from crossing it, lest he becomes guilty of the most horrible sacrilege) (Sandrart 1957:41). Tradition recounts a tragic story of a Rwandan hero who defied this taboo and paid with his life, lending full respect to the practice in Rwandan society.[37] This act was done in times of conflict. It was the last option the mother/wife could do to stop her husband/son from going out of the compound. As Rwandans have a strong group orientation, and loyalty to the group, family and village, the husband or son could not ignore that initiative of the wife/mother.

It is relevant to emphasize that usually in Rwandan culture, the integrity of the group is more important than self-reliance. Muzungu argues that in Rwandan society the individual is not perceived as an isolated atom but as a part of the whole entity because the ancient Rwanda was conceived as a big family (Muzungu 2003:53). The contribution of women in this respect was viewed as crucial because Rwandan people value the

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[37] According to the tradition this was what happened to one of Rwandan ancient heroes, the famous Ryangombe. Ryangombe was a renowned hunter and one day his mother Nyira-Ryangombe did not want him to go hunting because she was sensing danger. When Ryangombe continued to be stubborn, his mother felt compelled to stop him traditionally. Ryangombe ignored his mother's warning, crossed her traditional belt and went into the forest. When he got into the forest he noticed the danger and realized that he was about to be killed by an animal of the forest but it was too late to escape. Before his last breath, he acknowledged his rebellious act and sent a messenger to his mother, *Va annoncer ma mort a ma mère Nyira-Ryangombe: dis-lui: il a refuse de t'obéir; que l'enfant qui refuse d'obéir a son père obéisse au grillon...En tout cas, il a refuse de t'obéir et il a subi les conséquences.* Meaning literally, 'Go and announce my death to my mother Nyira-Ryangombe: tell her: he refused to obey you; a child that refuses to obey his father and mother obeys a cricket; he refused to obey you and he suffered the consequences' (de Heusch 1966:205-206).

communal life. Kagibwami confirms: "*L'individualisme était inconnu au Rwanda. Toute personne était fortement encadré par un groupe …qui occupait une grande place dans la vie de l'individu*" (the concept of individualism was unknown in Rwanda. Each person was fully integrated in a group…, which had a great impact on the life of each individual) (Kagibwami 1991:66).

Culturally, the wife or the mother was expected to play her role of peacemaking, reconciliation and unity building in her community. A husband whose wife was able to play her expected role adequately could enjoy peace and prestige among his colleagues who would say: *ukurusha umugore akurusha ni urugo* (One who has a wife of virtue has a better home). A particular aspect of bridge-building for Rwandan women was the role which was played by the queen mother who, as Lame has found, "filled the same function, ensuring the transition between two generations of men and the social and political cohesion secured by an alliance" (Lame 2005:438). The role of unity-building by the queen mother was vital because of the system of lineage of exogamy in Rwanda whereby the matri-dynastic lineage clans necessarily differed from royal clans. Kings and the queen-mothers could not come from the same clans. The purpose of this was to guarantee a degree of distribution of power in the kingdom. Muzungu has observed that the king was the son of the queen-mother designated before him and chosen from a determined matri-dynastic clan (Muzungu 2003:348). Women therefore were tools of unity and queen-mothers also played the crucial role of being agents of unity between the two different clans.

Moreover the queen-mother was seen as an agent of transition between the different generations, the generation of her husband (the deceased king) and the generation represented by the new king (her son) and the queen-mother's family, together with the ancestors. Her function extended also to that of being the tool for social and political cohesion between the two kings (her son and her husband) as it was intended by the alliance (Lame 2005:438). Rwandan women surely contributed to peacemaking and peace-building throughout the history of the country. Many, however, are those whose contributions, though not less valuable, were not publicly recognized in a male-

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dominated society. Indeed, in some cases, women are the ones who are able to imagine alternatives that break the deadlock of a conflict situation (Schreiter 1998:26), but it is also true that, at other times, women may be sources of conflicts.

In Rwandan history, one particular woman became notorious for her evil deeds. Kanjogera who died in 1931, was a famous queen, the favorite wife of King Rwabugiri and mother of King Musinga. Queen Kanjogera played a vital role as manager of the royal household, and was the focal point of all intrigue (Melvern 2000:41). Kanjogera used her power to organize and carry out a bloody *coup d'état* that cost the life of her stepson King Rutalindwa and ushered her own son, Musinga to the throne. Along with the king, a number of people were killed and others fled the country (Taylor 1999:179; Newbury 1998:58-59). "Kanjogera has become synonymous with a woman who wields terrible power and is the real authority behind the public face of a male leader" (Powley 2003:10). Despite the negative aspect of Kanjogera's character, however, she was one of Rwandan's most famous and brave female leaders before and during the colonial time.

In short, the Rwandan culture seemed to promote women's peacemaking role during the pre-colonial Rwandan society. However, with the arrival of the Europeans some aspects of the Rwandan culture were challenged. The few women who benefited from the changes that followed were primarily those who had the privilege to be admitted to the schools created by the missionaries.

4.3 Rwandans under the colonial rule
Colonial rule brought significant changes in the social life of Rwandans. Many of these changes are attributed to the missionaries who came with the colonial agents and worked with them. Below is a brief description of the contribution of both the colonial power and the missionaries to the Rwandan social landscape.

Rwanda was among the few countries in Africa which managed to keep Western people away from its borders at least until the late nineteenth century. Rwanda was spared from the slave trade conducted in most African countries. None of the Arab raids were ever

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conducted on Rwandan soil. The fact is that central and eastern Rwanda was well-organized under a centralized state ruled by a king (*Mwami*) whose militias and central court could be rapidly mobilized to counter any external threat. However, Rwandans could only keep away the outsiders for a short period. Later on the borders were opened and Rwanda was to submit to colonialism like other African countries.

As seen earlier, the first European explorer who was able to enter Rwanda was the German Gustav Adolf Von Gotzen. After him, Germans established a claim to Rwanda, which they made their colony in 1897. Germans even signed a treaty with Kigeri Rwabugiri, king at time, preventing him from allowing other Europeans on Rwandan territory. The treaty was not successful, however, for it was contested by the British who were in Uganda. The matter was settled by the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 which awarded Ruanda-Urundi to Germany (Taylor 1999:37-38). But German rule did not last; after a period of about twenty years they were replaced by the Belgians. Belgians continued with the indirect rule of the country almost following in the footsteps of the Germans and further consolidating the rulership of the *Mwami*. As Turner has noted, in Rwanda, first the Germans and then the Belgians opted for indirect rule, using the Tutsi monarchy for their own purposes, but reshaping it as needed (Turner 2007:59).

Despite their indirect rule, the Belgians were actively involved in Rwandan leadership and their involvement had both positive and negative impacts. Their rule was not enthusiastically accepted by the whole Rwandan community; some found it rather harsh and this led many peasants to flee to neighbouring Uganda (Melvern 2000:10). Powley asserts that,

> The Belgian colonial administration, by comparison, was sizeably harsh, and had a major impact on the structure of Rwandan society. Belgian authorities consolidated local power in the hands of Tutsi chiefs and privileged Tutsi over Hutu with regard to land rights, education, socioeconomic opportunity, and access to power. Most perniciously, the Belgians brought to Africa notions of race and race science and interpreted existing Rwandan social structures through that lens (Powley 2003:10).

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According to the above observation, the indirect rule practiced by the colonial power exacerbated imbalances in the social structure of Rwandan society. These imbalances generated conflicts that developed throughout history and culminated in the 1994 Genocide. Powley notes that "although Rwanda was definitely not a land of peace and bucolic harmony before the arrival of Europeans, there is no trace in its pre-colonial history of systematic violence between Tutsi and Hutu as such" (Powley 2003:10). The institution of identity cards by the Belgian colonial administration in 1933 fixed the distinctions among the social groups, which acquired an ethnic character. These identity cards played a horrible role in ethnic designation of individuals during the tragedy of genocide (Bale 2002:20; Powley 2003:10).

The 'indirect rule' did not prevent the colonizers from being actively involved in running the affairs of the country. At a certain point their power eclipsed that of the king who was even denied the right to appoint regional chiefs (Turner 2007:59-60). In 1922 the king was compelled to be assisted by representatives of the colonial masters. Later on the *Mwami* Musinga was dethroned following his persistent opposition to the involvement of the colonizers in the leadership of the country (Kalimba 2005:18-19). It was under the Belgian colonial administration that the borders of Rwanda were reduced, leaving parts of the territory to what was the Belgian Congo, other parts to the British Uganda and other parts to the German East Africa (Gatwa 2005:34). Rwanda still struggles with the problems created by this dismantling today.

Apart from their political interference in the management of the country, colonizers made some positive changes in the country. Belgians were involved in the protection of the soil from erosion and they brought new crops for agriculture, like coffee.[38] They introduced money in the country and generally improved the economy. More relevant to the objectives of this work is the impact of the colonial regime on women.

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[38] But the introduction of coffee in Rwanda, though it had an important value for the country, brought problems for those on whom it was imposed; it was viewed by the Rwandans as part of the corvée which had also been initiated by the Belgians.

Rwandan culture did not support women's work outside of their homes. If women were to work in their yards with their husbands, those kinds of activities were exclusively related to their families. Those less privileged could serve prominent Tutsi women and their daughters in their homes. Women's hard work depended on the social standard of their families. Daughters and women coming from well-to-do families – or any sound woman - were hardly seen in a public place. However, during colonial rule, some women, especially Hutus, had to endure more hardship (d'Hertefelt 1962:33). They were compelled to do hard work outside their homes. The condition of Hutu females was even worse as some of them were forced to work under the *uburetwa* or forced labour system. Newbury reports cases of complaints sent to the Territorial Administrator at Cyangugu in 1947, reporting that the employees' wives were beaten by the local sub-chiefs' representative in order to force them to carry out a corvée (Newbury 1988:169). Apparently some women were even punished when their husbands failed to fulfil their obligations of the corvée.[39]

The stated aim of the forced labour, *uburetwa* was to improve the life conditions of the citizens by improving the harvest, but the way it was carried out was oppressive (Prunier 1995:12). Under the pressure of this labour system, many Hutus, especially from the northern part of the country, migrated into neighbouring countries, especially Uganda. They left the country because a man and his wife had to work from morning to late at night for his chief and were continually beaten because of the labour. Some men explained that they had decided to take their wives to Uganda (the neighbouring country) because, when they were away, their wives were obliged to work, in addition to having to make up for obligations of their absent husbands (Mamdani 2001:110).

Seen from this perspective, under the colonizers, women, whether Tutsi or Hutu, were not valued. Rwandan women did not have a voice in public affairs or administration of the colony. Only women within the royal family, the queen-mothers, had a significant

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[39]The corvée or *uburetwa* was the labour, which was imposed on Rwandans by colonial regime from the year 1924. The labor consisted of the cultivation of food stuffs and economic crops introduced by the Belgian authorities. Because of the necessity of these new crops, Belgian authorities empowered residents to compel natives to carry out the labour, which then became obligatory work.

function in Rwandan society as discussed earlier. They were the only ones who played a vital political role during and before the colonial regime. Colonialism however came with Christianity, which was introduced by missionaries. Their mission and vision was to proclaim justice and equality, but the practice did not always match these values.

4.3.1 Christianity in Rwanda and its impact on the plight of women

Christianity had a significant impact on Rwandan society as a whole and affected the condition of Rwandan women. It did not bring an end to cultural aspects of women abuse, however. Before examining the impact of Christianity on the condition of Rwandan women, it is necessary to have a brief look into the Rwandan religious background.

4.3.2 Rwandan religious background and the advent of Christianity

Before white missionaries arrived on Rwandan soil bringing the Christian religion, the Rwandan people had their own beliefs. As Tenney comments about Christianity in Rome, in Rwanda, "Christianity did not begin its growth in a religious vacuum in which it found people blankly waiting for something to believe. On the contrary, the new faith in Christ had to fight against entrenched religious beliefs that had been in existence for centuries" (Tenney 1985:65). Rwandans of ancient tradition were monotheists, with *Imana* as the only God, the omnipotent and creator (*Rurema*) and source of everything (*Gihanga)* (Musemakweli et al. 2007:15). All three-inhabitant groups of Rwanda had the same beliefs centred on a Supreme being, *Imana* or God, that they called *Gihanga*, meaning the creator of the universe.

Rwandans considered God unique and with superior power even greater than the ancestors. This was expressed in their sacrifices and worship to other spirits. After the sacrifices and worship to those spirits they would address their final requests to *Imana*, as the most powerful God *Ahasigaye ni ah'Imana*. Kalibwami describes the Rwandan traditional religion as monotheist and not naturalist (Kalibwami 1991:99). Musemakweli, concurring with the conception of monotheistic belief, argues that the *Imana* was known by all Rwandans as YHWH was known as the God of Israelites. However, he recognizes

that there are differences in terms of the historical and formal plan of YHWH and *Imana*. While it is claimed that the God of Israel made a self-revelation to Moses and gave him a written covenant through the Ten Commandments, *Imana* had never done so to anyone nor made any alliance with Rwandans. *Imana* only communicated the ethical rules to the ancestors who in return transmitted them to their descendents (Musemakweli 2007:18).

Rwandan traditional belief in *Imana* was expressed through various proverbs, sayings and names. They believed that prosperity and children were gifts from God. They express this idea in the names given to their children such as *Habyarimana* (God is the giver of children)*, Harelimana* (God raises them and cares for children) or *Niyigaba* (God is the provider of prosperity). Rwandans believed that God is just and impartial which is expressed by the name *Ntirenganya*. They also believed in life after death and that the dead could have influence on the living. There was everywhere a general fear of unseen evil powers that are beyond one's control and from which one must be protected by the spirits of one's ancestors. The interventions of the ancestors were coveted because if the evil powers were not controlled they could bring different kind of harm; calamity, disease, bad luck, barrenness, and even death. But above all the influence of other spirits, *Imana* could oversee the whole situation.

Rwandan traditional religion was not separated from the socio-political organization. Kalibwami notes that the social or political authority sometimes had religious aspects. For instance, the father had to assume the priestly role in his family and he was the one who conducted the cult of the ancestors on behalf of his family. The same act was accomplished by the king on behalf of the population as a whole. Kalibwami's assertion is that as the socio-political life and religion were overlapping, religion did not have real clergy nor a clear religious community as it is with other religions. The person who stood as an interpreter of God's will to the people, whether the king or ordinary people, was the *umupfumu* (diviner). The king had his private diviners (Kalibwami 1991:103-104). Divination was an honourable profession which was respected by the whole population of the country, but which unfortunately later on was condemned by missionaries (Maquet 1957:98).

Traditionally women were respected in the spiritual realm. They were involved in the acts of sacrifices and were respected by the ancestors and could also perform many rituals. As diviners they could predict the future and advise the living families on the proper ways of taking care of their ancestors, as well as hearing from God. Like men, they could be involved in the act of purification (Bigirumwami 1984:224). When missionaries arrived in Rwanda they brought another kind of God. Various traditional rituals were condemned by Christianity; the traditional belief ystem was distorted. But apparently the new belief was not smoothly introduced to the population and perhaps because of the lack of a proper integration of the new belief to the minds of the population, some of them viewed the Christian God as a God of whites.

Christianity reinforced monotheism, emphasizing the existence of a Supreme Being, as the traditional religion did, but with different ways of worship and beliefs. Musemakweli clarifies that it was not easy to bring the gospel to Rwandan culture and to speak about a Trinitarian God to a community which has only one name for God. Roman Catholics chose to refer to that trinity as a mystery of faith, *amayobera matagatifu* (Musemakweli et al 2007:21). However despite the ways of transmission of the new belief, Rwanda is a country which has a high number of Christians. According to the 1991 statistics, almost 90% of Rwandans claimed to be Christians: Roman Catholic 62%, Protestants18%, Seventh Day Adventists 8% (Kalimba 2005:23). The Roman Catholic missionaries were the first to arrive on Rwandan territory and they founded their first mission in Rwanda in 1900, during the colonial era. Their presence was widely distributed throughout the land (Gatwa 2005:61). They were followed by the Evangelical Mission of Bethel in 1907, which later became the Presbyterian Church. The third mission was the Seventh Day Adventists who arrived in 1919, followed by the Anglicans in 1925. The Danish Baptists and Swedish Pentecostals came in 1939 followed by the Free Methodists in 1942. The Roman Catholic missionaries were more active in spreading the Roman Catholic Church, especially with the support of the Belgian colonial authorities. They also built schools, health clinics and printing presses for religious tracts, and were involved in various social actions. Birth control by contraception was banned and so was prostitution.

The White Fathers- *Père Blancs-* were the first missionaries who succeeded in reaching the royal court. Their strategy was to conquer the land (the whole country) by their faith, starting from the *Mwami* and the influential chief Tutsis in leadership. But the latter were not ready to embrace the 'religion of the whites', so the missionaries' request to establish their first mission in the vicinity of the royal court was completely rejected. They were only granted a place 50 km away from the royal court (Rwanyindo 2003:129). The royalty resisted conversion well up to 1930.

At the end, *Mwami* Musinga himself was deposed, having refused to be converted to Christianity. Musinga was depicted as anti-Belgian and was replaced by his son Mutara Rudahigwa in 1931. Rudahigwa was chosen and enthroned by the Belgians to replace his father, an act totally against Rwandan traditions. Rudahigwa accepted to become a Christian and was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church on 17 October 1943. The new king was known by his Christian name Charles Leon Pierre. He was baptized on the same day with the queen-mother whose Christian name was Radegonda (Bale 2002:13). The king's conversion was followed by a massive number of Tutsi conversions (Bale 2002:13). The conversion of King Rudahigwa was a successful strategy for the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, Christianity became a prerequisite for membership of the Tutsi elite.

In 1943, King Mutara III Charles Leon Pierre was persuaded to dedicate Rwanda to *Kristu Umwami* (Christ the King)*,* which he did on 27 October 1943. The ceremony was venerated with a three-day celebration of the dedication (Melvern 2000:10-11). The country was then declared Christian, and Roman Catholic missions were built almost all over Rwandan territory. Roman Catholicism then became like a state religion, which made it almost impossible for a non Roman Catholic to have easy access to schools, jobs or any significant position in the country. Most of the population adopted Roman Catholicism because of the various privileges they hoped to get, such as jobs and other favours from the administration.

The mass conversion of the population to a new faith raises questions about the understanding of Christianity in Rwanda. The masses that turned to the new religion did not necessarily understand its teaching, besides being allured by privileges offered by the new religion or yielding to its pressure. Resisting the pressure was not easy, as is evidenced in the case of Musinga who lost his throne as a result of his opposition to the agenda of the missionaries. Foreign culture and worship was adopted at the expense of traditional religion and culture without a smooth transition. Some traditional and cultural practices such as polygamy and ancestral veneration were banned, considered to be sins. Cultural cerebrations such as the harvest, normally conducted by the king, were dismissed or replaced by Western celebrations which were observed as holidays in the country (Kalibwami 1991:287). Excited about the success of the Church after the mass conversion that followed the king's baptism, Mgr Classe is reported to have triumphantly remarked: "There will not remain a single pagan in the country!" (Kalibwami 1991:221). The changes brought by Christianity were not merely theological. They were felt in the social life and they had an impact on women's condition.

4.3.2.1 The impact of colonialism and Christianity on the plight of Rwandan women
A major contribution of colonialism to colonized countries was through education, a major tool in the enhancement of changes in a society. Colonial rule brought education to the Rwandan population. However, education was exclusive as it was mainly reserved for the *sons* of chiefs. The Roman Catholic Church took the lead in opening schools. After primary school, all the learners were to be baptized. Opportunities for post-primary education were largely restricted to Tutsi *males*. Hutus attended Catholic seminaries, whose aim was to train future priests and not leaders of the country. Hutus from seminaries were therefore unable to compete for jobs in the colonial state, virtually the only major employer in Rwanda (Turner 2005:61).

The Germans established a school in the royal capital Nyanza, a school then known as the Royal German Missionary School. Tutsi sons were trained in that school. This Royal School was followed by many others, especially when the Belgians took over the rule of the country. All these schools aimed at training more Tutsi sons. In 1907, Fathers Dufays

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and Mgr Classe started a school in Kabwayi "to surely reach the sons of the chiefs Batutsi… the born rulers of Rwanda" (Mamdani 2001:89). In 1930, a few Hutu male children were allowed admission in some schools though there was a clear distinction in the education of Tutsis' and Hutus' sons: Tutsis were given a superior education in French while the few fortunate Hutus' sons were given an inferior one in Swahili (Mamdani 2001:113).

Later on, Roman Catholic Brothers, *les Frères de la charité,* opened a high school, *Groupe Scholaire Butare* at Butare for administrative training. Between 1945 and 1954, out of 447 students, only 16 were Hutu. There was also another administrative school for Tutsi, *Ecole des Batutsi,* at Kinyaga in Cyangugu in the Western part of the country. There were others in the country but all of them were exclusive; only a very limited number of sons of Hutu were allowed to enrol (Newbury 1988:257).

This exclusive education had a very negative impact on social relations in Rwanda. It reinforced divisions among social groups and contributed to animosity between Hutu and Tutsi. The education of Tutsi elite facilitated colonial rule, as they were working with more or less trained people. The Mwami Mutara III Charles L. Pierre Rudahigwa known as 'the king of whites' was the first Rwandan king to wear western suits, drive his own car and the first king who could read and write (Melvern 2000:10). In his time there were also a few other young men who had already graduated and so could assume some leadership responsibilities. There were also a number Hutu graduates even though they were not allowed into the administration since they were not trained for leadership.

Colonial education was not designed for women. It was absolutely restricted to *males*. Discrimination in education had a far-reaching impact on women in their role during the colonial period. No Rwandan woman had a say in any public affair, let alone in the administration of the country. All the privileges were reserved for males while the female children were to stay at home with their mothers. Even missionaries who brought Christianity did not act differently. Instead of contributing positively and changing the plight of women during the colonial rule, "the introduction of Christianity supported by

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state policies that drove indigenous religions underground, undermined women's access to religious authority" (Longman 2006:134). It took time before some open-minded missionaries challenged the status quo and started to implement certain changes - and a very minimal female education was initiated at last.

4.3.2.2 Female education during the colonial rule
The colonial regime supported and even reinforced the patriarchal structure of Rwandan society. As mentioned above, colonial education favoured the education of Tutsi sons but their daughters had no access to that privilege; it was not designed for women. It was absolutely restricted to *males*. Opportunities for post primary education were largely restricted to Tutsi *males* (Turner 2005:61). "Priority was given to boys who were the potential leaders" (Mukangiliye 1980:70). In terms of schooling, females were discriminated against and marginalized even more than Hutu sons. During this period no female was privileged enough even to partake in the inferior education open to Hutu boys, which would give her a chance to be promoted to any higher position in the society. It was only later, towards the end of the colonial rule, that a few females, whose parents were close to Protestant missionaries, could attend some elementary schools, outside Rwanda in Burundi and Uganda.

Formal female education started very late in Rwanda. It was not before 1955 that Rwandan girls could access a kind of post-primary education. Around 1945, the most privileged girls could be educated at the primary school level. Young girls were to stay at home helping their mothers, as traditionally female education concentrated on housework. Hence, throughout their childhood, girls were prepared to be housekeepers, taking care of the home, of the children, of guests, cooking, as well as learning how to please their future husbands. As Human Rights Watch/Rwanda writes:

> From a young age, the education that girls receive from their mothers initiates them into their future lives as wives and mothers. A woman will take care of the house as well as working in the field. She will learn certain kinds of behaviour such as keeping a reserved attitude, or submission…the strength of a family is measured in the number of its boys (Human Rights Watch 1996:19-20).

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However, toward the end of colonial rule some changes took place. In the late 1950s, Anglican missionaries promoted the education of young girls by allowing few of them to enrol in their *Ecole des moniteurs,* a teachers' training school at Shyogwe, in Gitarama. The school was initially for boys but by the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, a very limited number of girls were also accepted to register. By 1957, the same missionaries opened *l'Ecole menagerie,* a two-year home economics-oriented school for girls at Shyogwe. This school trained young girls in domestic duties, such as home management, cooking, and childcare (Kalimba 2005:68).

Roman Catholic missionaries started schools for girls with the same orientation of home economics, which increased the number of trained young girls. The training in those schools was elementary, a period of two years post-primary, but it was better than nothing. They even allowed a few females to enrol in one of their schools at Save in Butare which was a four-year post-primary school. Meanwhile, the Anglican missionaries also helped some young girls, though few in number, to get training outside the country. Those girls were from the families whose parents were well known by the missionaries because of their involvement in the church or hospitals. Most, if not all, were from Tutsi families. Their daughters were sent for training either in Uganda, for those from the northern part of the country, or in Burundi for those in the southern region. Even with these initiatives, female education never went beyond two-year post-primary programs that mainly focused on, besides home economics, training them for primary school teaching or nursing, all at an elementary level. In the years nearing independence however, some schools opened their gates to young girls. In 1959 a girls' high school opened at Remera, *L' Ecole Technique Féminine Pédagogique de Remera (E.T.F.P.R)* providing advanced training in home economics. After ten years it had 264 students. In 1968-9, very few of the first graduates from this school entered the *Université Nationale du Rwanda (U.N.R)* (Rwanyindo 2003: 145). In the year 1962, another school for Protestant girls was opened at Kilinda, this time training young girls in nursing (Mukangiliye 1980:69).

But there were opportunities for some women, especially those whose parents were close to the missionaries. They were allowed access to selected jobs, such as cleaning in hospitals, patients' caregivers and other menial tasks; some were allowed in labour wards to assist the missionary nurses, so they could take care of the mothers and the newborn babies. After gaining experience they could be promoted to higher positions of assistant nurses.

At the end of the colonial period, the education of women saw a slight improvement compared to the situation prevailing during the colonial or pre-colonial times. As Taylor has observed, biographical sketches of women whose lives straddled the pre-colonial and early colonial period are indicative that women's lives did not improve under colonialism (Taylor 1999:179). Independence was expected to bring more significant change.

4.4 Rwandan women from independence to the time of the genocide

Independence did not, however, bring gender equality to Rwanda. Women continued to be subjected to discriminative practices of the Rwandan patriarchal culture. However, their opportunities to access education increased and some reached the university level. A few who were privileged made their way to some leadership positions. Most women however remained silenced by socio-cultural hindrances and their contribution was not noticed. When the genocide started, Rwandan women, ill-equipped to oppose it, became the main victims. The condition of women in independent Rwanda depended very much on their level of education.

4.4.1 Female education and condition during the time of Rwandan independence

Rwanda gained independence on 1 July 1962. With the support of the Belgians, Rwandans abolished the monarchic power with a referendum vote, and the first president, Kayibanda Gregore, was elected. Kayibanda was later on replaced by Maj. Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana. Habyarimana gained power by a military coup in July 1973 and stayed until he died 6 March 1994, when his plane was gunned down.

During the first republic after independence, female training saw a very slight improvement. National University was founded in 1963 with 49 students. The number increased up to 4550 in the year 1999 but the number of women was not impressive. In 1997, Rwanda had a total of 5571 students in higher education. In 2007 the figure stood at 26,796 students, with only 39 % female (MiGEPROF 2004:7)

In those years, the patriarchal mentality was so domineering that parents were more likely to withdraw a female child rather than a male child if needs arose. It was observed that among children first enrolled for primary school, the number of girls and boys would almost be equal, but as the years went by the number of girls would drop. This indeed resulted in the low number of girls at secondary and university level (Waller 1996:56). If school fees were unavailable, or if a child had to drop out of school because of other family problems, girls were more likely to be withdrawn. This was mainly due to the traditional thinking that a woman's place should be in her home, precisely in the kitchen. Traditionally it was believed that educating a female child was a waste of time and money as the destiny of women was largely defined by her eventual marriage. In addition, throughout the colonial regime only males were involved in leadership. Thus, the chance that a woman would have a role outside her home was grim.

As it was asserted above the focus of training was on male children even in the religious sector. Long before independence in 1913, the Roman Catholic Church had established a higher seminary, *le Grand Séminaire de Kabwayi* where the emphasis was on the training of future priests. After independence, the Roman Catholic Church established a good number of *Petits et Grands Séminaires* (Junior and Senior Seminaries) for young men all over the country. But female education was always behind. The result was that even after independence, women were poorly represented in the positions of leadership of the country.

4.4.2 Women's involvement in leadership

Because of the lack of education, women were excluded from public activities. But even the few women, mostly from the Tutsi social group, who had elementary training could

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not exercise their talents. It was noticed that it was among them that the new Hutu leaders found wives. This explains, even if partly, the number of Tutsi wives of the intellectual Hutus in the First and Second Republic in Rwanda (Twagiramaliya and Turshen 1998:104, 111). Most of these 'educated' women therefore were not allowed to carry on their careers outside their homes as they were married to men of high rank in the government such as ministers. The government was expected to take care of the domestic expenses so as to allow the wife to provide guests with good hospitality and ensure the well being of the home. During the eleven years of the first republic, only two women were able to ascend to higher positions of leadership though it was for a very short period. Mrs. Ayinkamiye was made a minister in the government, and Mrs. Mukakayange was elected as a member of parliament.

In July 1973, Habyarimana overthrew Kayibanda and established the Second Republic. During the Second Republic, the education of women took a better shape as some were able to continue with higher education at university level. However, leadership and administration opportunities were not significantly available to them. In the area of government and administration, there were no women ministers until the coalition government of 1992. Nor were there any women prefects or burgomasters (communal administrators) (Waller 1996:56).

When Rwanda opened up to a multiparty system in 1991, major political parties were given seats in the government. But a genuine coalition government was formed in 1992 (Chrétien 2001:209). Some of the parties appointed women to those positions with the aim of attracting attention and winning support from the general population. Mrs Agate Uwiringiyimana was then back in the government, after more than twenty years of absence of women in such top positions. A chemistry teacher in the national university, Uwiringiyimana had been one of the first female members of the Movement Democratic Republican (MDR), a political party founded in 1991 but often perceived as the revived Kayibanda's MDR-Parmehutu that had monopolized power in the First Republic. Uwiringiyimana was chosen by her political party and was included in the coalition government on 6 April 1992 as the minister of education. Eventually, before the

genocide, she became the prime minister in the same coalition government in 1993. The main opposition parties refused to support Uwiringiyimana's appointment as Prime Minister, and each party split into two factions (Chrétien 2001:2110). Two other women, Mrs Pauline Nyiramasuhuko and Mrs Agnes Ntamabyariro, were also appointed ministers in that coalition government by their respective political parties. These were the ministers for women and family affairs and the minister of justice, respectively.

Under the Habyarimana regime, some other women, although not ministers in his government, held positions such as Members of Parliament but in a minimal number. The presence of a few women in the government opened more doors and more opportunities for the education of women as parents became more aware of the value of having their female children educated.

Women's education was still lagging behind, however, and until 1994 the percentage of females in leadership was very low. The social conditions of Rwandan women affected their active involvement in their community and the nation, as well as their attitude toward the conflicts that culminated in the genocide.

4.4.3 Women's contribution to the peace-making act before and during the genocide

Very few women were involved in politics before the genocide. Madame Uwilingiyimana was the most prominent woman in politics as the prime minister and she held the office for a very short period. She is reported to have had a heart for caring and protecting the marginalized. Melvern estimates that she was among the few people who could speak and challenge the dictatorship of present Habyarimana. She was the only woman who confronted him, and questioned him several times on the issue of distributing arms to civilians (Melvern 2000:106).

Uwiringiyimana was the only woman who could speak with authority because of her position in the government. Because of her boldness, she was among the first people to be killed on the very first day of genocide. Nyiramutarambirwa was a prominent woman who used the opportunity given to her to speak out, and she lost her life fighting for

social justice. But beside these few heroines known because of their prominent positions, there are others whose peacemaking initiatives remained unrecognized. Many women suffered because of their efforts in this respect. Others survived but their acts are not reported either because they happened in secret, or because their achievements were minimized in the patriarchal culture. Many ordinary women lost their lives, their husbands and/or their children when they attempted to stand against injustice and violence before and during the genocide.

However not all Rwandan women were innocent in the genocide. Some women who held leadership positions during the genocide compromised their expected qualities of peacemaking. Strauss argues that some who were in leadership positions at the national and local levels were instruments in organizing, promoting and authorizing genocidal killings. Some looted victims' houses or informed the bands of killers where the Tutsi were hiding. From Strauss's statistics, women constituted about three percent of the prison population in 2001 and 2002 (Strauss 2006:100). Some women who had leadership positions were found guilty of being perpetrators of the genocide, such as the well-known Pauline Nyiramasuhuko.

Although Rwandan women were not all innocent in the genocide, the number of those who actively participated in the crime is actually low considering their number in the whole population. Most women may have been opposed to the genocide but had no power to stop it. The Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana who attempted to resist was eliminated from the beginning. Ordinary women could have contributed to the prevention of the genocide but it is unthinkable that there was anything simple women could have done to stop it. The helplessness of women was manifested not only in their inability to stop the genocide, but in the vulnerability that made them victims of the tragedy.

4.4.4 Women victims of the genocide

The war and the genocide caused the death of many male adults. Many more were arrested and jailed or went in exile. All these men left behind women and children who need to be cared for. A large number of them do not produce what they need. As a result

of the war and the genocide, women are expected to meet the needs of the families by assuming all the responsibilities traditionally and culturally assigned to men, which, due to prevailing circumstances, are added to their habitual duties. In 2003 the estimated number of women heads of household was 34% of the population.[40]

In addition to economic problems and security-related hazards in post-genocide Rwanda, many women were abused. They were victims of sexual violence taking different forms such as rape, sexual slavery, sexual mutilation, forced pregnancies, and HIV/AIDS infection. Women and girls, irrespective of their age, ethnicity and political affiliation, were targets of sexual abuse (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1996:1). Women suffered various kinds of victimization and/or were murdered because of both their gender and their tribe. "There could be hundreds of bodies in a grave, predominately women and children. It is estimated that 70 000 women were raped and 350 000 witnessed the murders of family members" (Koffi 2004:15, 18). Rape survivors were left with severe stigma, physical and psychological injuries aggravated by a sense of isolation and ostracization (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1996:1-2). Research on violence against women estimated that more that 250 000 Rwandan women and girls were victims of different forms of sexual violence.[41] Most of these abuses have lasting injuries, which women continue to suffer after the genocide.

4.4.5 Sufferings of Rwandan women as consequences of the genocide

In addition to many socio-economic problems shared by all the survivors of the genocide, Rwandan women continue to suffer injuries peculiar to them. Those who were victims of sexual abuse continue to bear consequences of these abuses in their bodies and minds. An additional kind of trouble was experienced by women in mixed marriages.

4.4.5.1 Sexual related injuries

The majority of Rwandan women who suffered the tragedy of rape during the genocide were Tutsi. The same problem of rape, however, was later on reported among Hutu

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[40] Information provided by the official gazette of the Republic in 2003.
[41] The estimated number provided by AVEGA Agahozo, research on the violence perpetrated against Rwandan women.

women after the RPF took control of the country. In the years following the genocide, cases of rapes with violence and even sadism were still reported. Some women were raped, decapitated, and thrown into latrines. Others, accused of being *interahamwe,* were savagely violated: stripped naked, they were kicked with boots, beaten with wooden sticks, and knives were used to cuts their genitals (Twagiramariya and Thurshen 1998:105-106). Doctors have attested to the high numbers of rape victims they examined immediately after the genocide, confirming that two rape cases a day were coming to the clinic. Most victims had vaginal infections and some tested for HIV although it was impossible to tell if they had contacted the infection as a result of rape (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1996:25).

Women then, whether Hutu or Tutsi, suffered horrible acts of rape in various ways. Rutayisire, referring to Tutsi women, says, "They were beaten, tortured and they suffered the indignity of rape or gang rape in public, some in front of their husbands and children" (Rutayisire 2005:530). But with the issue of rape, very few cases are recorded as most victims of rape or of sexual abuse generally do not dare reveal their experiences publicly. Some fear to be rejected by their families and even their communities; others are concerned about jeopardizing their chances of getting married in the future, or fear because their rapists are their neighbours (Human Right Watch/Africa 1996:2). Some victims fear for their lives because of the power and position of their rapists. They do not talk to avoid dishonour or the wrath of their aggressors (Twagiramaliya 1998:105). Besides sexual related violence, some Rwandan women in mixed marriages underwent peculiar sufferings during or after the tragedy.

4.4.5.2 Conflicts based on intermarriage

Despite the ethnic problem which has created conflict, Rwandan history seems to confirm that intermarriage between Tutsis and Hutus, even among the royal family, was a common phenomenon. This provides reason for questioning the purity of race in Rwanda. Gatwa reports a case of a former Catholic priest who criticized one colonizer for stressing exclusion in education. The colonizer argued that schooling was to be granted to the children of chiefs who were surely known as Tutsis. The priest ridiculed the colonizer

who "was unaware that even the son of the king who was just born [Rudahigwa born in 1911 became king in 1931] had for a grandmother, a girl of the common people, Nyiranteko. The latter was from a *Bahutu* background" (Gatwa 2005:85-86).

It was also noted above that in the time of the First and the Second Republic, intermarriage was regularly practiced among the Hutu elite in positions of leadership. But even among ordinary people intermarriage was a common practice, the tendency being more for Tutsi women to marry Hutu men than the reverse.

However, during the Second Republic, this practice met with some resistance, especially in the military sector. Soldiers were discouraged from marrying Tutsi women, but many of them, especially from high ranking officers, had Tutsi women for concubines. Among the ordinary people, however, there was no rule against mixed marriages. In this Chrétien is justified in saying that "ethnicism was an affair of the elite before it became one of the rural masses, even if its referents are part of Rwandan culture" (Chrétien 2003:333). Surely there have always been people who were not open to the idea of mixed marriage. Some of the young boys and young girls wishing to marry across ethnic boundaries faced strong resistance from their parents and relatives. In most cases the resistance was broken and marriage happened. As Taylor has noted,

> Conjugal unions between Hutu men and Tutsi women were not at all uncommon in the 1970s and in 1980s, even if they were not the norm, but by the 1990s the negative perception of such unions had become much more pronounced. During the genocide itself, Hutu men with Tutsi wives were often forced to kill their wives in order to prevent their own deaths and a more gruesome death for their wives (Taylor 1999:196).

During the genocide, mixed marriages underwent periods of extreme pain. Tutsi women were killed, sometimes by their in-laws. Others were killed with their children and their husbands when the latter tried to protect their families. Ethnicity divided families and turned members against each other: children killed mothers, husbands killed wives, brothers and cousins killed each other because one was Tutsi, the other Hutu. For some it

was done willingly; others were forced to do it upon pain of death (Twagiramaliya 1998:111).

In the Rwandan tragedy, each partner in mixed marriages had his/her time to be the cause of insecurity, depending on which social group was targeted. The most painful moments occurred in cases in which Hutu husbands were forced to kill their Tutsi wives, or, after the genocide, Hutu husbands were compelled to surrender their Tutsi wives, and wives were obliged to give in to sexual slavery in exchange for a promise of protection for their Hutu husbands. As Rucyahana observed, most Tutsi men who married Hutu women were killed, in many cases with their children, leaving the wives childless. In Rwandan culture, the children take the tribe of their fathers. Rwanda, like most African countries, is a patrilineal society. The ethnicity is determined by the line of the father. A person could have pure-blood Hutu ancestry on his mother's side and a very mixed-Hutu-Tutsi ancestry on his father's side, but as long as the father is considered a Tutsi the child will be considered a Tutsi (Rucyahana 2007:5).

 Sometimes the children were killed by their uncles, the brothers of their mothers because the children were Tutsis, and those Hutu widows stayed childless. In many cases these women would request to be killed (this happened to some of my close friends); but not all of them 'were privileged' enough to have their request granted. They have to endure pain, trauma and hostility after the death of their husbands and children. Besides losing their husbands and children and sometimes being rejected by their biological families, the Hutu women who were married to Tutsi men are also rejected by their surviving family in-laws. Many Tutsi women who survived the genocide were forced to leave their husbands. In cases when there was resistance, the husband was alleged to be *interahamwe* and was sent in jail where he would soon find death (Twagiramaliya 1998:111-2).

In a number of Rwandan families intermarriage has brought and continues to generate serious conflicts. It is true that both men and women suffered the genocide but women seem to carry more of its load than men. Some are forced to care for unwanted children

from a rapist and murderer of their families; others are ostracized by their families, ethnic groups and communities; others are widows who will die childless with deep hostility to their own families who are killers of their husbands and children. Human Rights Watch concurs that the consequences of the genocide are being carried on the backs of women (Human Rights Watch/Africa 1996:69).

The outward appearance of the society to non-Rwandans may seem healthy, but a small incident is often enough to show the reality. One needs only to watch closely what happens during the period of April to July every year, when Rwandans are mourning the victims of the genocide, to understand the pain in their hearts. There is the need for a genuine reconciliation that would heal the wounds and bring peace by restoring trust among the people. Women could play an important role in this process of reconciliation.

4.4.6 Summary
The above study of the Rwandan context is guided by Ukpong's suggested steps in the analysis of the reader's context, as mentioned in the first chapter of the present work. The analysis focused on socio-anthropological, historical, social and religious aspects of the Rwandan context. The findings of this chapter revealed that there has been mistrust among the three Rwandan social groups, especially among intellectuals, due to social imbalances that generated rivalries and exclusive ideologies. Moreover, the colonizers, instead of helping foster understanding and harmony between the social groups, fuelled the conflict by showing preference to one group at the expense of the others. This created hostility which continues to be the cause of problems.

Ukpong's first two steps served as tool to analyze and understand the contribution of women in various sectors of Rwandan society throughout Rwandan history. The social analysis assisted in the study of Rwandan culture with respect to women. It was observed that Rwandan culture promoted women's roles of peacemaking and unity-building in some sectors in the society. Traditionally and culturally, women were agents of peace, unity and reconciliation in their families, with neighbours, and in their communities. Culturally, women's activity in the process of peacemaking was respected. When given

opportunities, their contribution to leadership, especially the Queens or queen-mothers, was appreciated like that of the men. Women were also viewed as a secret force for the success of the king's leadership, even in battles.

Ordinary women were also respected as Rwandan culture reserved a valuable room for women's influence, especially in peacemaking. In the economic sector, they were believed to be the heart of prosperity for the nation through their contribution to their families. Religiously, Rwandan culture and traditional beliefs promoted women's power. Women played an important role in Rwandan traditional spiritual beliefs, the female deity *Nyabingi* being a tangible example. However, colonialism and the introduction of Christianity greatly changed the traditional and cultural aspects of the nation.

Rwanda became an official Christian country the day it was dedicated to Christ the King on 27 October 1943. However, the analysis of the religious sector revealed that Christianity was largely imposed without much understanding of it by the population. Thus, generally, Rwandans adopted Christianity as a style of life, some with the aim of pleasing the missionaries in order to get jobs or other benefits. The fact that Christianity became more a means to a lifestyle than a transformative religion is one of the reasons its impact was not strong enough to prevent the tragedy of the genocide.

This chapter discussed how women were marginalized and abused by both the Rwandan patriarchal culture and the colonial regime. Excluded from education, a very limited number of women received some elementary training in family management toward the end of the colonial period. These women still could not find any serious jobs and had no choice but to remain confined to domestic work in their homes. Their role of peace-making and unity-building was thus inhibited. A slight change took place during the post-colonial time, toward the end of the Second Republic, when the education sector started opening gradually to women. The improvement primarily affected urban women who had access to a certain level of education. However, it was almost impossible for women to access positions of leadership or other important offices, due mainly to the patriarchal mentality that 'a hen does not crow in the presence of a rooster': *Nta nkokokazi ibika*

isake ihari. Their lack of involvement in important sectors of the government was a main reason behind their inability to contribute to the prevention of the genocide.

While the findings revealed that not all women were innocent during the genocide - a small number were negatively involved - the great majority were victims of genocide because of their gender. Women are still suffering consequences of the genocide. This chapter confirms the need for work to be done in the realm of reconciliation because of the pain and animosity left in the population by the genocide.

It is necessary to involve women in the act of building their country, together with men. I believe that dialogue with women from other cultures may shed light on new ways of dealing with conflict, even if Rwandan women's cultural role is challenged. From this perspective, this work chose to interact with women in the Fourth Gospel. The next chapter deals with their context.

CHAPTER 5: THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN AND THEIR ROLES IN THE FIRST CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the context of the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to John. It is an inquiry into the context surrounding and influencing the events recorded in the Gospel and an attempt to enter the social milieu of its author. This chapter proposes therefore to examine the first century Mediterranean world, with a particular focus on its socio-cultural background. The chapter has no intent to exhaust the socio-historical description of the community of the Gospel, but to grasp some relevant information about the socio-milieu of the author with special focus on the predicament of women in that setting. This will lay a foundation for examining the attitudes of women in the selected passages in matters pertaining to peace-building, peacemaking and reconciliation.

We will look into the context of Mediterranean region during the first century with a focus on Jewish women in the region of Palestine and those in the Diaspora in the Greco-Roman regions. However, we approach this section with the awareness that there is not enough material devoted specifically to Jewish women during the first century.[42] We will therefore need to examine other domains such as the place of women in families, both in the Roman and Jewish societies as well as the condition of slave women. The chapter will also look into the life of women during Jesus' time, the period of the biblical texts, which are the focus of this research work. The chapter begins with a brief look into the background of the Fourth Gospel.

5.1 Background of the Fourth Gospel

The Fourth Gospel, designated the Gospel according to John, is one of the twenty-seven books that make up the content of the second part of the Bible known as the New

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[42] Detailed information about the lack of material written or devoted to women will be clearer as the chapter progresses as well as in other sections of the thesis. However, an extensive literature written on women is provided and the interaction with this literature will give us the needed information for this chapter.

Testament. The New Testament was written during the first century[43] of the Christian era by different authors in different times and to different audiences. It was later appropriated by an audience very different from the people of its generation. This explains the reason for studying its context with an attempt of grasping some of the main points of its message in its own time. Malina and Richard argue: "If we seek to understand what John's Gospel meant to its original audiences, our question should be: What sort of situation and what set of concerns might adequately explain the scenes presented in the document called the Gospel of John?" (Malina 1998:4). But our first step will be a brief discussion of the question of the authorship of the Gospel.

5.1.1 Authorship, date and place of writing of the Fourth Gospel

The Fourth Gospel is silent about its author and some scholars believe that the gospel is a product of an anonymous writer. It is argued that the gospel was attributed to the apostle John to claim a certain authenticity and authority (Yamaguchi 2002:2). There are various arguments about the authorship of this gospel; some argue for the plurality of the authorship. They claim that the Fourth Gospel is a compilation of more than one set of material from different authors. From this perspective, some of them prefer to use the term *authors* (Conway 1997).

But almost all the exegetes of this gospel agree that the author (s) is someone who was familiar with the Jewish area, traditions and customs. After considering the views of various scholars, Perkins (2005) asserts that the Fourth Gospel reflects the Jewish background. Her article looks into different findings of scholars who were involved in the diversity of first century Judaism which include, for instance, the references in the gospel to the patriarchs Jacob and Abraham (John 4:5-6, 1:51; 8:31-58), the exposition on the bread of life which was compared with the homiletic exposition of the midrāsm, Jewish wisdom traditions (Perkins 2007:944-945). According to Perkins' conclusion the gospel was written by somebody acquainted with those diversities.

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[43] Some books of the New Testament were possibly written in the second century, but as the objective of this work is not the exploration of the time of the writing of all the New Testament books, the information given above will be sufficient for the present work.

Guided by the question 'what does the author know?' Neyrey notices that the author has a great knowledge of the geography. He knows about Judea; for instance, he refers to Bethany and Jerusalem. He knows Samaria as he points to Sychar, Jacob's well. He is familiar with Galilee; he speaks about a number of regions such as Bethsaida, Cana, Capernaum, Nazareth, Sea of Galilee/Sea of Tiberius and others. Neyrey also argues that the author is somebody who knows the Jewish tradition and even the Temple Feasts and the Sabbath. He also knows the Scripture and Midrashic interpretation (Neyrey 2007:2-4). These considerations pointed out by Perkins and Neyrey lead to the assertion that the author of this gospel had a Jewish background. Recent work by archaeologists also confirms that he had an extensive and accurate knowledge of Jerusalem.[44]

While some scholars attribute the gospel to an anonymous writer, the tradition and some scholars attribute it to the apostle John the son of Zebedee and Salome. Elwell and Yarbrough write "The view that John, the son of Zebedee, one of the original twelve apostles, wrote the Fourth Gospel, was held uniformly by the early Church Fathers and for this reason became the traditional view held by the Christian church until modern times" (Elwell and Yarbrough 2005:109). More overt is Köstenberger who argues that in reconstructing the historical setting of the gospel one finds that a combination of internal and external evidence provides plausible grounds for concluding that the author is 'an apostle, one of the twelve (the disciple Jesus loved), John, the son of Zebedee', even though the hypothesis of the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel is rejected in recent Johannine scholarship (Köstenberger 2004:6-7) [45].

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[44] The paper offered in the recent session of 'The Fourth Gospel and Archaelogy" at the Society of Biblical Literature Conference in San Francisco (S21-131)19-22 November 2011. I am grateful to Professor Jonathan Draper for bringing this to my attention.

[45] There are different arguments on the identification of the beloved disciple who might have written the gospel. Some scholars like Moloney (1998) believe that the beloved disciple was the son of Zebedee but Moloney observes a continuous debate about John's authorship. He says, "Whether or not the son of Zebedee was the author of the Fourth Gospel is the subject of never-ending debates" (Moloney 1998:8). But Waetjen expresses his conviction that the beloved disciple is nobody else but Lazarus because of the sisters' declaration, "Lord, the one you love is sick" (John 11:3). He even identifies the Fourth Gospel as the Gospel of the beloved, referring to Lazarus. The beloved disciple "is none other than Lazarus. For the formula 'ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς' that is used of the Beloved Disciple in 13:23, corresponds to the characterization of Lazarus, ὃν φιλεῖ that his sisters employed in the message they sent to Jesus while he was sojourning in Transjordan " (Waetjen 2005:18-19).

However, what matters to this research work goes beyond the name of the author; the interest is more on the background, his community and all the events that may have marked and influenced his writings. The focus is therefore on the social setting of the author, which may assist to understand the context of the gospel.

Concerning the question of the time of the writing of this document, the date depends on the assumption about the author, as questions of who wrote and when he wrote the gospel actually overlap. Those who agree that John the son of Zebedee was the writer believe that he composed it from Ephesus around A.D. 90s (Unger 1985:698-699; Harrison 1971:218-225; Elwell and Yarbrough 2005:116).[46] Köstenberger mentions that the date may be between A.D. 70 and A.D. 100. But he adds that "If Thomas' confession of Jesus as 'my Lord and my God' is intended to evoke associations of emperor worship under Domitian (A.D. 81-96), a date after A.D. 81 would appear most likely" (Köstenberger 2004:8). The discussion of the authorship and date of the gospel is also linked to the question of its intended audience.

5.1.2 Recipients of the gospel and their community

The debate about the original readers/audience of the Fourth Gospel has not reached consensus among biblical scholars. For those who believe that the gospel was written by the apostle John, the intended readers were living in Ephesus and its surrounding as they argue that the gospel was written in Ephesus. Hendriksen, pointing to the explanatory notes about Jewish customs and conditions, attempts to convince us that the original audience was mostly composed of Gentile Christians (Hendriksen 1979:35). Perkins believes that the recipients were the people familiar with the "we" linked with the Johannine community in John 1:14, 16; 21:24 and with the Logos hymn used in the prologue, as well as with John the Baptist (3:24). In Perkins' view, however, though the audience might be familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the prophetic

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[46] Although there are some debates among scholars about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, a few of them do not attribute it to John. Many others support the tradition which attributes its authorship to John son of Zebedee and Salome. Only a very limited number of scholars support the authorship, date and place of writing as quoted above. The information on the expulsion from the synagogue in chapter 9 is taken by some to refer to the Synod of Yavney in 80.C.E which supports the view of those who put the date before 100 A.D.

quotations and even with the major heroes of patriarchal period, reference is made to some events, for instance the Jewish feasts, in a way that may reveal that the author and his audience were no longer observing them. These include the Passover, Sabbath, purification rites, and burial customs. Perkins believes that the readers of the gospel must be envisaged as the Christian Jews in the Diaspora (Perkins 2007:949).

During the Roman Empire, the Diaspora was referred to as the dispersion of the Jewish people outside of their homeland Palestine - conceived as a holy land, the land promised by the covenant with Yahweh. In addition to Babylonia and Egypt, Jews lived in many other countries outside Palestine, carried there very often as prisoners of war, but also by voluntary emigration. Wordelman confirms that through military and economic conquests during the prior three centuries, Rome had expanded its domain to encompass parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa that surrounding Mediterranean Sea (Wordelman 1998:482). People of the Diaspora were driven away from their homeland for various reasons; for some it was for political reasons, but there were those who voluntarily could decide to leave their homeland. The recipients of the gospel are then believed to be primarily a community of Jews regardless of their location whether Palestine or any Mediterranean region.

 Moloney observes that the community was characterized by Jewish messianic expectations, illustrated by various events in the gospel. These events include the act of religious authorities who come from Jerusalem to ask about John the Baptist's identity in John 19:28, the testimony of John the Baptist in John 1:29, 34-39 and also the disciples of John the Baptist calling Jesus a 'Rabbi' and Messiah and following him (Moloney 2005:1418). According to Moloney, these events and many others in the Fourth Gospel provide a clear indication that the Johannine audience could be identified as a Jewish community which was familiar with these Christological issues and their implications.

To the suggestion that the community was Jewish comes the challenging issue of the language of the gospel, the Koiné Greek. Yamaguchi provides a solution to this, pointing to the community of a mixed audience of the Greco-Roman world (Yamaguchi 2002:3);

Greek was a common language of the Empire. The possibility remains that the implied audience of the Fourth Gospel consisted of a broad area of the Mediterranean region within the Greco-Roman world rather than a narrow region of Palestine. For the purpose of this work, it is assumed that the audience of the Fourth Gospel consisted of the Christian Jews and Gentile converts who were living in the broader Mediterranean region both on the Jewish land and in the Diaspora. It is then important to look into some aspects that characterized that broad region starting from the milieu of the Greco-Roman world during the first century, with specific interest in the condition of women.

5.2 The Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean region during the first century

Having in mind the objectives of this work, the main aspects that attract our attention in the Mediterranean region during the first century are the cultural events which have significant impact on the plight and life-conditions of women. This will include a brief examination of the culture, geography, social and religious environment as well as political and economic aspects. Moxnes observes that in that region during the first century, the religious and economic spheres were embedded in politics and kinship which were the dominant social spheres. He observes that those spheres were not separated as we have them today; political and kinship spheres included the economic sphere (Moxnes 1997:19). One needs to understand the political system of the time in order to understand the other systems of the region during the first century.

5.2.1 The political and economic situations of the first century Mediterranean region

During the first century, almost the whole of the Mediterranean region was under the Roman Empire which continued even during Jesus' time. Palestine too, the land of the Jewish people which was the homeland of Jesus, was under Romans occupation. Stambaugh clarifies that the Jewish kingdom in which Jesus was born was ruled by an Idumaean king with a Greek name. Herod, who was half Jew, half Idumean, was installed and sponsored by the Romans (Stambaugh and Balch 1989:13). Jewish people were much influenced by Hellenistic civilization, and the Greek language was as commonly used as Aramaic, their native language. The New Testament was written in Greek, the official language, to meet the needs of the population of the Empire. Before Jesus was

born therefore and during his life, Palestine, which is part of the broader Mediterranean region, was under dominion of the Romans. Daniel-Rops provides some information about the Roman rule during that period:

> The Romans held the country in the fullest sense of the term, either directly or by means of servants…But at the same time they followed their usual custom and allowed their subject people to continue to be administered by the regime that they were used to, which meant, for Palestine, the organization of the Jewish community as it had grown up since the return from exile. There was, therefore, a super-imposition of authorities, a fruitful source of complication…The city-empire or the empire took to themselves the right of imposing a rule upon their subjects' lives that was in accord with their highest interest (Daniel-Rops 1962:51-2).

During this period, every aspect of life in Palestine including economics, politics, and culture, was influenced by the Greco-Roman civilization. The structure of the economy in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean region was determined by the leadership of the empire (Duncan-Jones 1992:1). A discussion of the political system of the area during this time may shed some light on the involvement of women in the economic domain.

5.2.1.1 The political structure and women's participation

The economic system in the Mediterranean region during the first century highlights the interdependence of political, economic and religious spheres, interpenetrated by kin relations. To illustrate this, Hanson and Oakaman give the example of Herod the Great. He not only expanded the Jerusalem temple mount with tax monies, but built temples in honour of Roman emperor's gods. They point out that the emperor of Rome was not only supreme commander of the government and military *Princeps* (head man) but was the highest priest of Roman religion (Hanson and Douglas 1998:5). Stambaugh affirms that the political was the means of shaping the economy in that area during the first century. The political organization consisted of hierarchical layers of patron-client relationships. This system involved a kind of a reciprocal exchange of goods and services between the patron and the client (Stambaugh 1989:64). The chief patron at the top of the system was the emperor who was the patron of his client-kings.

Wordelman adds that a male emperor, along with a senate of wealthy Roman *males* governed the empire with a heavy hand. Romans appointed *male* governors for outlying provinces and administered the taxes and military forces through which Rome exercised its power over the vast empire. Moreover, there were some councils consisting of *men* from the wealthiest strata of the community which were dealing with other affairs of the local communities (Wordelman 1998:482; Yamaguchi 2002:15-14). It is observed from the above argument that the leadership of the empire was in the hands of males. As it appears in their description, no females had the privilege of holding office in that leadership system. Moreover, in Ando's description of the structures of the leadership of the empire, a consistent use of the pronoun 'he', without any single use of the pronoun 'she' may be a further evidence of the absence of females in leadership positions. Ando even specifies later that those leaders, official and unofficial, were men. He says: "Such *men* specifically ranged widely in age and experience…" (Ando 2006:180).

The absence of women in the leadership of the empire extended into the army, where it seems there were no females at all. Referring to the composition of *legion*s, Pollar writes: "the number of legions in the empire (each composed of c.5-6,000 men)…this military unit had an actual strength of 750 men. … At the start of the First Jewish revolt, Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, had 14,000 men mostly archers and cavalry… three legionary vexillations of 2,000 men etc." (Pollar 2006:209, 212). The absence of women in this office implies the impossibility of women performing the role of peace-making, because, as Ando states, "Romans governors were required to make themselves available to their provinces to settle disputes and receive petitions on matter great or small" (Ando 2006:190). It seems that the political system was closed to women. They were not allowed to participate actively in the public politics of the Empire. The hierarchical administration of the Empire depicts a lack of gender-shared power in terms of leadership. This had implications on the way economic power was shared since those in political power were also the ones who controlled the economy.

5.2.1.2 Economic structure and women's participation

During this period, the Romans, Greeks and Hebrews measured wealth and status in terms of land and flocks. The economic system was agrarian, based on the land. And one needs to note that land was owned only by males. Many New Testament scholars, including Kehoe (2006:298-300) and Mattingly (2006:284-288), believe that the land was very much valued by all the inhabitants of the Empire as it was the economic source of the empire. The tradition of the economy based on land continued even in the early times of the New Testament. But during this period the land was no longer the only source for the economy. Stambaugh notes that by the time of the New Testament, money and movable wealth had also become important (Stambaugh 1989:63). Despite this additional source, the land kept its value, and socially speaking, farming and land-ownership were the most respected sources of wealth; manufacturing and commerce were looked down on (Mattingly 2006:284). Arguing in this line, Duncan-Jones estimates that the effectiveness of trading, especially in lending money as investment, leaves it doubtful whether the very rich who controlled a large part of all the liquid resources sought to invest in trade. He believes that there was little to suggest that commercial success engendered the large operating-units seen in much later societies (Duncan-Jones 1990:489)

The economy during this time was controlled by a limited number of people. The elite class controlled more than 50% of the wealth of the society and lived in luxury with enormous power (Yamaguchi 2002:14). The overall economy was in the hands of a few as the material wealth of the Greco-Roman world was distributed unevenly among the population. A tiny fraction of the population owned a vast proportion of land and *resources* while the masses were obliged to make use of moderate means (Stambaugh and Balch 1989:65).

The structure of the relationship between economic and political power in the Roman Empire is illustrated by a pyramid. This sketch shows that the wealthy citizens were occupying the upper tip controlling most of the wealth and political power and the base of the pyramid was occupied by the poor people. According to Wordelman the structure

of the household mirrored that pyramidal shape of the economy and leadership of the empire. The head of the family (the father) occupied the upper tip of the pyramid in the household and as male power and authority dominated political life, the male figure (husband) in his household controlled all aspects of economic and household life. Women could not be at the upper tip of it. The exception was only in the case of widows of citizens; they could play the role of heads. Opportunities for women to acquire wealth in order to get to the upper tip of the pyramid were limited. Only citizen women could benefit from social privileges of ownership and they inherited wealth either from the late father or husband. But most of the time women were not free; even as owners they were obliged to have a legal male guardian (Wordelman 1998:483-484). This weak position of women was part of the general condition of women at this time. The following sections provide first a general overview of the condition of women in the whole Mediterranean region before focusing on Jewish women in particular.

5.3 The condition of women of the first century Greco-Roman Mediterranean world
Discrimination against women was generally grounded on questions of their ability to contribute fully to the life of their community, and is often followed by limitations on their access to the education which was available during that time. Women of the first century Mediterranean region were excluded from education and relegated to work indoors, except for the elite women. This situation surely inhibited their potential but did not nullify their contribution to the social life of their community. Poorly educated and with restricted activity in public life, these women still contributed to the socio-economic life of their community - not only from their work in the homes, but also by their influence and support to their men.

5.3.1 Female education in the first century Greco-Roman Mediterranean region
Discrimination against women was a reality in the kind of educational domain which was in place; education offered during that time was open only to *male* children (Gleason 2006:244-245). This was one main obstacle to women's involvement in the social life. For instance Gleason speaks about education, *paideia,* explaining its aims and importance in that society, how it was something greater than just the training of the young. She

refers to the *paidea* as a term that encompassed the whole Greek claim to cultural supremacy. The aim of this education was to produce adults competent for political success with the eloquence and self-confidence necessary to perform the part of aristocratic manhood. The trained young boys were then expected to exhibit such qualities, becoming patient, dutiful, and ambitious, to assimilate the required canon of critical texts, and to make allusion to these texts for the rest of their lives (Gleason 2006:244-245). Gleason's description does not include females and seems to indicate that the education was exclusively reserved for elite *male* children. This is probably because women were barred from all civil and public functions. "They could not be judges, or jurors, or hold magistracies, or appear in court or intercede for others or be agents" (Bauman 1992:1).

Women were rather given some kind of instruction in domestic arts. There was the possibility, Levine writes, for some women to be taught literacy at home. Even then, she guesses, the curriculum for girls was likely limited to reading, writing, and poetry; mathematics and rhetoric were not included (Levine 1991:229). The general view about female education by most scholars is that during the first century, even during Jesus' time, women's education was not only low, it was minimal. This is supported by Grundem who notes that "at the time of the New Testament wives were younger and less educated than their husbands" (Grundem 2004:217).

Speaking about Jewish women, Levine refers to the words of some Rabbis who equate education with the study of the Torah, and indicate that Jewish women were more or less prohibited from attaining any meaningful degree of education. But Levine believes that educated Jews in the Greco-Roman period studied far more than the Torah. She believes that there were a few educated women but probably in the elite families (Levine 1991:230). From the point of view of Jewish culture, the father was in charge of the education of the sons especially in terms of training them to become men. According to Daniel-Rops (1962) the Rabbis claimed that the finest knowledge was found in the Bible; even grammar, history and geography or at least the rudiments of them were all studied in the Bible. Josephus boasted of having this knowledge at the age of fourteen and the

Apostle Paul reminded Timothy about his learning from his childhood. Thus, Daniel-Rops believes that it was this exclusive use of the Scripture in teaching that caused many Rabbis to refuse education for girls (Daniel-Rops 1962:111-112).

Undoubtedly, their lack of education had a negative impact on women's general social condition and restricted their participation in major sectors of development in the empire.

5.3.2 Women's restricted contribution to public life

In the male-dominated society of the Roman empire, women were not officially recognized in matters of economy-building or leadership. The reason may be found in Richard Saller's comment: "Less training of women, hence lower productivity and lower wages for women, hence less economic independence and possibly lower valuation of women in their families, and less growth in productivity for economy as a whole" (Saller 1994:195). Saller states that some domains were exclusive and closed to females. Women were specifically employed in domestic services. Concerning noble women who may have had opportunities outside their homes, Evans comments that information at our disposal about the statistics of noble women are poor (Evans 2002:38).

However, women's contribution towards the economy of the society was important if one agrees that the economy was based on the land and the participation of women was felt in the households. Yamaguchi points out that ordinary peasant women worked in the fields almost year-round and supplemented their farm incomes by making and selling their handcrafts, some of them working as various kinds of day labourers, wet-nurses for instance, or domestic servants for wealthy families (Yamaguchi 2002:18). Men were also responsible for the well-being of their families in terms of providing, but women had a double load of work. Besides their domestic work, which included the daily management of the house, they were also responsible for outside work as well, in the fields and other supplementary work for more family income. Considering their involvement in the stewardship of agrarian products which were the fundamental elements of the whole economy of the region, women played an important role.

As seen above, public participation of women in the political life was scarce if it could ever happen. Grubbs argues that at no time in Roman history could women themselves serve as senators or hold political magistracies at the imperial, provincial or local level. In fact public offices were closed to them:

> Just as women were banned from representing others in court [Part V.A], they also could not themselves serve as judges in court cases or hold public office, both of which *ipso facto* involved representing others. As the jurist Paulus (writing in the third century) realized, the real reason for this restriction was that it had been instituted that in the long-ago past, and respect for the 'customs of the ancestors' (*mos maiorum*) was so great that it over-rode contemporary social realities (Grubbs 2002:74).

Grubbs argues that those who were privileged could play important roles in imperial society because of their wealth and family connections. But despite the exceptional cases of women with high social status, it seems that generally women had little say or opportunity in public matters. According to Lewis, the male-driven social mentality of this period presupposed that males were formed mentally and physically for outdoor work while women were suited primarily for indoor work (Lewis 2002:59-60).

Such unfortunate discrimination against women did not, however, deprive them of all influence. Women could not hold office but they did wield influence, particularly in their homes, though it was indirect. Bauman notes, "It was through men that women could exert any influence in the public sector, whether by council, enjoyment, manipulation or promise, a woman could only operate behind the scenes" (Bauman 1992:2). The participation of any member of the society of the Roman Empire was determined by the law. The law then put women in a particular position by prescribing limitations to them.

However, Winter argues that most scholars who perceive women to have been totally kept away from the public gaze in the first century do so because they see women's roles in terms of a single stereotype of restriction to the home and reproduction activity in the vast Roman Empire. He claims that first century women, unlike their sisters in the previous Classical Greek and Hellenistic eras, certainly appeared in public. Even in the

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Classical Greek period, cultural mores for women were not always the same as for the Mediterranean as a whole (Winter 2003:6). Winter believes that the conditions of life for women had undergone changes over the centuries but scholars report only the primitive period. He believes that the situation of women during the first century C.E. had improved compared to the Classical Greek period.

In agreement with Winter, Ilan points to aspects of women's roles during the same period which were not confined to indoor work. Women's work extended from domestic to shopkeepers and to innkeepers, though he agrees that these were not respectable occupations. Women were also midwives and if a woman could work as a midwife she probably could round out her knowledge of anatomy and work as a physician, whether or not she had formal training. Ilan believes that women had general medical knowledge and were customarily consulted regarding the treatment of illnesses (Ilan 1995:187-189). But even though Ilan speaks about this important knowledge of women, he is aware that it was just a general knowledge, which was rather elementary; they could not secure a firm career outside the home.

Collins also believes that women were involved in the society in the same manner as men. He presumes that, given the exchange involved in the patron-client system, it appears that wealth and beneficence were tied closely to public honour and influence for all members of the Roman Empire. He believes that the absence of women patrons in the scholarly literature was the result of Roman legislation restricting the role of women; otherwise, some women functioned as patrons in a manner similar, if not identical to that of men. "Women appear to have rendered the same social, political and financial services to their cities as their male fellow citizens and they were honoured for those services in the same way" (Collins 1995:15).

A close to this discussion reveals some controversies in this information about women's contribution. One of the major reasons for the debates may be connected to the lack of written material produced by women's hands. Information connected to women is obtained from reading in-between the spaces of males' materials written on other

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subjects, not necessarily on women. This is because males were the ones who were privileged with that capacity. As Yamaguchi and Richlin note, ancient literature was almost exclusively written by privileged *males* who reflected the perspective of a tiny elite male group rather than the majority of the ordinary people, particularly women (Yamaguchi 2002:11; Richlin 2006:330). Levine's observation is that "the barriers to learning about women when our only data come from men are notorious and legion" (Levine 1992:1).

The issue of lack of material from women's hands extends also to biblical texts. Rakoczy highlights the fact that the books of the canon of Scripture were all written by men. It was, she observes, the patriarchal church tradition which decided which writings were to be included as 'canonical' (Rakoczy 2004:103). The point here is that as far as we know, the biblical texts were composed by males and were interpreted by males in order to decide the books to be included into the canonical list. This may confirm Wordelman's assertion on the New Testament material - that it contains many images of women but reveals little about their everyday lives. Wordelman observes, for instance, that there are images of women drawing water, anointing bodies, travelling and so on, but those individual images do not provide the social context from which the reader can clearly identify them (Wordelman 1998:482).

Considering the arguments of the scholars discussed above, the assumption may be that no or at most very few Mediterranean women had the opportunity to hold a political office in the Roman Empire. There may have been exceptions but a generalization cannot be made that women were actively involved in the politics of the Empire. Certainly the norm of male political power and authority was at the expense of women because of the way they were portrayed by the society as "mentally and physically inferior, irrational and superstitious" (Wordelman 1998:482). However, one should also be careful of assuming that women were banned from any important activities, though they were certainly excluded from certain ritual and cultic activities reserved for men (e.g. the male priesthood in Israel, which is prescribed by Torah). The best way to go about it may be to adopt Collins' argument: "The percentage of women of wealth in the synagogue was

representative of the women of wealth of the larger population, both constituting a small percentage of the total population" (Collins 1992:19).

In this regard, considering the hierarchical administration of the empire - also associated with male dominance - one may speculate that women exercised some influence. Haas believes that although women were not included in chains of males' influence when establishing policy or during its control, women may still have exercised some power by means of their behaviour and persuasion, influencing men's decision-making without using authority. He believes therefore that each mode of influence is effective, and for him it distorts reality to assume that only male authority has been important in that society (Haas 1995:2). Women's participation was not in the same manner or at the same level with men, but they exercised their power in other ways which also had some impact on the society. One way of assessing this is to consider their roles in families.

5.3.2.1 The concept of family in the broader region of Mediterranean
Family in the Mediterranean region during the first century was viewed as fundamental to the society. The family was the basic reference for individuals and the channel through which he or she was inserted into social life. It was from the family that the individual received his or her status because, "the family was like the depository of position in the society and the transmitter of economic resources" (Guijarro 1993:62). From this tradition therefore, women in their families were also builders of economy in the family, and so in the society. The value of their contribution to their community is linked to the role of the family.

Speaking about 'family' requires some understanding of that term. The term *family* does not have a universal meaning. For some it refers to a nuclear group of husband, wife and children; for others, it refers to a larger group. For instance in the Rwandan context, family means more than just husband, wife and children. Rwandans view the family primarily in terms of relations; referring to the extended family including relatives of both the husband and the wife. In collectivist cultures, the family is viewed in terms of

consanguinity, that is, a blood connection. They determine membership of a 'family' on the basis of shared blood via a common ancestor (Hellerman 2001:28).

In the first century, in the New Testament as well as in Greek literature, there was no specific word for 'family' in the sense of a nuclear group that consists of wife, husband, and children. Instead in the Mediterranean region during the first century and even before the Christian era, the term *family* was used in various perspectives referring to a larger number of people, household, kinship, marriage, and inter-relations between members (Campbell 2003, Yamaguch 2002:20-21). Grubbs observes that the Romans did not have a Latin word corresponding exactly to the English term 'family'. For them the term *familia* which translated as family has a meaning closer to 'household'. She therefore points out that the Roman *familia* comprised all those under the power of the male head including slaves and his children (Grubbs 2002:17).

The society of the Mediterranean region was a patriarchal society. The father/husband was the head of the family, the *paterfamilias*, who governed the household, the wife and other members of the extended family like the unmarried sisters and brothers of the husband, slaves etc (Grubbs 2002:18). But there were also families that were headed by females, in cases of single parents, widows or even families headed by one of the siblings at the absence of the parents. The Bethany family of Mary, Martha and Lazarus is one example (John 11:1-44). Women had a specific place and role in their families, as discussed below.

5.3.2.2 The condition and role of women in family settings in Roman society
Roman society considered marriage as one of the fundamental institutions in the community. Marriage was viewed as an act that joined not only two individuals but two families. It was, as Hellerman saw it, "a legal and social contract between two families for the promotion of each family, the production of legitimate offspring, and appropriate preservation and transferral of property to the next generation" (Hellerman 2001:31). In Roman society, marriage was an act of constructing and firming the ties of the families of the bride and the groom in a new relationship. But it was also significant for the couple; it

was meant to join them together for life with all expected benefit from it. Grubbs described it as being "the joining of male and female and a partnership for all life, a sharing of divine and human law" (Grubbs 2004: 81).

The Roman culture believed that the family was the 'seed-bed of the city' (Lassen 1997:103). It seems also that marriage was not only valued by the civil law, but even culturally, families were highly respected. This assumption comes from Treggiari's observation that the Roman culture had set specific rules of ancestral custom to shape and protect families. There was also the ancestral law which provided and strengthened the power of the head of the family, the father (Treggiari 2002:132).

Concerning the citizen body of Roman society, Treggiari and Lassen say that it was composed of two groups, the patricians and the plebeians. The major group of the society was the plebeians. The second group, the patricians, was restricted but it was the one that supplied the senators (Treggiari 2003:132; Lassen 1997:104). Grubbs refers to the patrician group when she speaks about the contribution of women of high status in the empire. "Women of high status – those from high senatorial and equestrian families and those in the municipal elites of the empire – played an important role in imperial society because of their wealth and family connection" (Grubbs 2002:71). But one may concur with Evans that those who could grasp the opportunities of freedom because of their status, and make some contribution, were few. Otherwise most of them were still considered to be very inferior and remained under the male's dominance, especially their husbands' (Evans 2002:39-41). Thus, as discussed above with respect to the exclusive political system, the contribution of women was limited. The normal participation of women was rather felt in the domestic sector, not in public. Dixon (Dixon 2001:112-113) clarifies that military, literary and political activity, supervisory care of landed estates and the duties of patronage were the proper business of an elite male. She however specifies that women were not idle; they were praised for their domestic duties.

The primary role of a dutiful wife was to be engaged in childbearing and managing the household but without being independent. The extreme treatment of females is reported

by Wordelman (1998:484-485) who states that in the Greco-Roman world property rights and social conventions favoured males; citizen households could choose not to rear female babies. They would rather place them outside where anyone who wanted could take them. Some of them died, and those who survived ended up being slaves or prostitutes.

Both young girls and the young men were under the control of their father. However, the extent of the dominance over the children differed due to its time frame. Female children were under male (*paterfamilias)* authority for life, because the control of their fathers before marriage was legally replaced by the control of their husbands at the time of marriage (Treggiari 2002:132-136). Young girls and boys were not free to choose their partners; their marriages were arranged by their fathers following their own motives. This implies that the spouses were not necessarily happy in their marriages; perhaps this was the reason for a great number of concubines in this society. Dixon and Wordelman argue that most men looked for prostitutes, slaves and mistresses for sexual satisfaction besides their wives (Dixon 2003:112; Wordelman 1998:484), and there were societal norms that were designed to protect the sexual adventures of married men. Osiek specifies that a husband incurred no legal punishment for infidelity unless the affair was with a married woman. According to Osiek, it was accepted that husbands would make use of slaves, both male and female, for sexual purposes while married women who sought sexual relationships with their male slaves could be charged with adultery (Osiek 2006:22). In fact almost everything in this society favoured men at the expense of women. If a man was not pleased with his wife, he was legally allowed to have another wife because polygamy was culturally accepted, or he could look for prostitutes or divorce her (Dixon 2003:112; Wordelman 1998:484). The condition of women was also reflected in the attitude of the society towards slave women in the community.

5.3.2.3 Slave women in the first century Greco-Roman Mediterranean region
In the Greco-Roman Empire of the first century, wives and slaves shared much in common within the patriarchal household. "Both fitted, by nature, to be ruled, not to rule. Both shared intimately in the life of the household, including religion, economy, child-

production and nurturing, and burial. Both wives and slaves in many ways remained in a state of perpetual liminality" (Osiek 2006:95). Nobody can say that all women in the whole empire were treated at the same level; however, some women, from the high social class, were treated differently. But it was an insignificant number compared to the rest of the women in that society. Generally women shared the fate of submitting to male domination.

Slaves, whether male or female, owned nothing, had no independent legal rights and were obligated to follow the instructions of their master. The position of a female slave, however, whether Hebrew or pagan, was quite different from that of a male slave. They did not enjoy the same rights even in their master's houses; men were more respected than women (Daniel-Rops 1962:144). Slave women were viewed as less valuable human beings than men.

Moreover, in terms of marriage, regardless of the class of the girl in this society, slave or citizen, throughout the Empire, marriage often took place when the girls were still too young to begin family responsibilities; they married at the age of twelve. This involved a number of risks in their lives including the dangers of early pregnancy. Wordelman estimates that the situation of slave girls was even worse because of their vulnerability to sexual abuse by their masters and other more powerful males. Slave women had little or no protection against sexual abuse and rape; they were considered available for any male, free or slave (Wordelman 1998:285).

Because of their vulnerability to sexual abuse, dangerous methods were used by women, whether slave or citizen, to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Wordelman records a few examples; for instance they used resins to block the cervix, or herbal concoctions to create infertility. Some were advised to use hard strategies to avoid the implantation of sperm in their wombs while others would attempt to terminate their pregnancies by using concoctions to induce abortion (Wordelman 1998:285-288). There were many dangers; they could die from childbirth infections, through the process of abortion, by malnutrition and so on. Death of women when giving birth was frequent; Osiek confirms that giving

birth was by far the greatest threat to a young woman, slave or citizen (Osiek 2006:21). Indeed there were some differences between the noble and high class women's life condition and ordinary women, but that there were few exceptions. The majority of women were exposed to countless forms of abuse.

The present research focuses on the recipients of the Fourth Gospel, people who were likely to be familiar with the Jewish background. It is then worth reviewing conditions of life for women in the Jewish society of the first century.

5.4. Jewish women in the first century Greco-Roman world

Jewish women, a part of the broad Mediterranean region, were under the influence of the Roman Empire's regulations. The Roman Empire wielded ever-increasing power over the known world, and Greek Hellenism permeated every culture (Zeiner 2003:18). The cultural flux in which Jewish women lived in under the Roman Empire in the first century when they were exposed to the Roman and Greek cultures was described in the preceding sections. The Jews did not necessarily lose their identity, as aspects of Jewish culture did influence their lives. The current section discusses the impact of Jewish culture on the condition and role of Jewish women, including how women were portrayed in some Rabbinic texts, although the date of these texts and traditions is uncertain. This reveals the thinking of the learned class of that society and the way they perceived women. The section ends with a discussion of the conditions of women portrayed in New Testament writings.

5.4.1 The general plight of women in the Jewish society

Similar to women in Roman society, Jewish women were considered to be lesser than males. Women/wives were considered the property of the husbands. Daniel-Rops makes a comment that men took advantage of one of the ten commandments, where it is said that no one should covet his neighbour's wife, servant, or ox and so on (Daniel-Rops 1967:127). The commandment was interpreted to imply that a wife, like an ox or any other thing in the family, was the possession of the head of the family. The obligation for the husband was to protect his wife and to value her as his most precious possession

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among the others. A man had a duty to feed, clothe and maintain his wife; whereas the wife's duty was to carry out the household tasks and to wash her husband's feet, a task which the male slaves could not be compelled to do (Evans 2002:34). Jewish women normally were to stay in the house. Philo is reported to declare that all good Jewish women should stay at home. He lamented that some Jewish women were out and about in the market-place, even fighting and using foul language (Taylor 2003:271).

In this society, as in some African cultures, women paid a great deal of respect to their men. This respect was partly due to women's low position in the society which favoured their marginalization. It was improper for a respectable man to speak to a woman in the public. The open-air life that allows a great deal of scope for discussion and action was suitable to men in times of both war and peace. Women were best suited to an indoor life which never strays from the house (Spencer 2004:149). Thus, this scope was considered a male prerogative, a means of acquiring and defending masculine honour, while women's voice outside the home was seen otherwise: "vocal women ran the risk of being tagged as shameless tattlers, busybodies, and threats to the social order" (Spencer 2004:149). Women were only allowed to express their opinions within the household.

Moreover, women were considered to be stumbling blocks, an object of temptation for men. Repeated several times in the Talmud is the directive: "Do not converse much with women as this will ultimately lead you to unchastity" (Evans 2002:35). Women in this society were generally viewed as not as complete human beings as males.

One way of understanding the extent of the marginalization of women is to consider how the society represented them as the epitome of weakness, expressed in remarks such as "since even a woman can do philosophy, every man certainly can. Women as an essential category are here given as examples of the weakest members of society, who may yet do philosophy of a kind" (Taylor 2003:216). Thus, compared to men, women were always looked down upon. Most careers therefore were exclusively open to men because of the patriarchal-driven thinking of the society, not because of lack of capability of women.

This attitude of the Jewish society toward women is further reflected in the place reserved for female education

5.4.2 Female education in Jewish society

Female education was not promoted in Jewish society. This was due to the view of Rabbis who did not approve of girls receiving the same level of education as their brothers. Zeiner argues that like the Greeks and the Romans, Jews believed women to be 'light of mind' and incapable of understanding the deeper nuances of scripture and law (Zeiner 2003:57). As discussed above, there was a problem of teaching the Torah to women apart from the few exceptions of those from families of high status who perhaps were taught at home. Such women were taught to read or, in the communities where Hellenistic ideas and civilization were acceptable, women were taught Greek. The education of women in these communities brought men and women into closer contact, though that closeness was believed to lead to lax moral behaviour (Evans 2002:34).

The role of women was to produce children (preferably males) and their task in the education of the children was done in the domestic rather than public arena. "Judea had a household centred society where family life represented a critical element in the socialization of its children" (Zeiner 2003:56). The family was very much valued in the Jewish culture, the cornerstone of the entire building (Daniel-Rops 1962:115). A mother was mandated to provide basic knowledge to the children - both boys and girls - but she was to carry on with the domestic education of her daughters. Osiek specifies that the education in the home was especially beneficial to slaves and girls who did not have access to formal and higher levels of education. She believes that women could work for their intellectual achievement even though they were excluded from higher forms of rhetorical education - which was associated with public life - by organizing their education at home (Osiek 2006:85). The father was in charge of the education of the sons especially in terms of training them to become men. "Throughout the child's first three years their mother bore the brunt of their training. It was her responsibility to impart rudimentary lessons in Jewish morals and wisdom. After this the sons continued with their education with their fathers" (Zeiner 2003:56).

The primary role of a Jewish woman in this society was to provide male offspring for her husband. Hellerman's states that the barren womb, or childlessness, meant "sonlessness". Hellerman illustrates this referring to women in ancient Israel, such as the barren Rachel who requested Jacob to give her a son, and Manoah who complained to his wife that the Lord had shut up her womb so that she might not bear children. Hannah was taunted by Peninah who had produced male children while Hannah did not. After she delivered Samuel, Hannah could now celebrate '…My husband will love me because he delights in the sight of my sons standing around him like a plantation of olive trees…' (Hellerman 2001:33-34). Thus, speaking about children in that culture implied speaking about sons not daughters.

The father's role therefore was to educate his sons; few fathers however, could teach their sons how to read and write as few males had that capability. Only the elite class were trained; the majority of the peasants were illiterate. Apparently Zeiner's observation applies to the elite families, "At five years of age young boys began to read the Hebrew Bible starting with Leviticus so that they could start off learning the laws and ordinances of their people. When they turned six they went off to school (*bêth-midrash*) where they received moral and intellectual training" (Zeiner 2003:56-57).

According to the law, the age of marriage of a male child was eighteen; a father was advised to marry his son while he still had his hand upon his neck. Marriage was respected in this society because traditionally it was said that a marriage was decided in heaven by God himself fourteen days before the boy's birth. This tradition of marriage at that age may justify the choice of parents for their sons (Daniel-Rops 1962:118). The restricted role of Jewish women in the society seems to have been largely supported by the Rabbis who were the respected opinion leaders in their time.

5.4.3 The Rabbinic view of women and its implication in the Jewish society

Although the Rabbinic texts[47] are generally seen as patriarchal in their orientation, Rabbis sometimes noticed and acknowledged the qualities of women. For instance, Rabbi Jacob is reported to have asserted: 'One who has no wife remains without good, and without a helper, and without blessing, and without joy' (Witherington 1990:6). Witherington also reports the Rabbis' appreciation of women's potential spiritual influence. This was expressed in a Rabbis' popular saying, 'If a pious man marries a wicked woman he will become wicked, but if a wicked man marries a pious woman, she will make him pious' (Witherington 1990: 6).

Apart from such few positive comments of the Rabbis, other comments did not uplift women. For instance, Baker speaks about instructions to men that aimed to stop any contact between them and women, instructions which show the class bias of the Rabbis. The Rabbis instructed that a man should not teach his son a trade that is practiced among women. Always a man should teach his son a clean trade. A man who has business with women may not be alone with the women (Baker 2002:82). Meeting between females and males was to be avoided since women were viewed as objects of temptation.

From the perspective of exclusion, Mishnah Kiddushin (4.13) says that a wife is not to teach her children, perhaps as a result of the fact that women were excluded from studying the Torah (Witherington 1990:7). This has to do with the Rabbinic thinking that women were not to handle the Torah because of ritual uncleanness. Women's separation from the Torah was deeper than a mere issue of not touching it. Cook argues that in the frame of the synagogue in modern forms of Orthodox Judaism, women do not share 'the power seat'. He claims that they actually sit geographically removed from the dynamic centre of the conversation between the divine and human, which means that they are removed from the ark and the Torah. Women cannot have access to the honours of the

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[47] The dating of the Rabbinic texts however is problematic in terms of specifying the ones which point to the early centuries. We cannot assume that what the Rabbis said was what happened in Jesus' time or the Gospel of John's time, as, for instance, the Mishnah was only written down in 250 C.E. at the earliest, and the Talmud around 500 C.E. or so. Indeed there is early material in there but it is also debatable among the scholars as to what is early or late. But this debate does not remove the reliability of these texts.

Torah as they are not allowed to open the ark, to carry the Torah, to read from the Torah or to return it to the ark (Cook 1999:40). They are not invited to lead Jewish prayer, Cook continues, and in some environments not even their voices are heard joining in the congregational chanting of prayer. He concludes that if what happened in the context of synagogue worship defined the boundaries of Judaism, the complaint is valid that Judaism is a patriarchy and religious Jewish women are devalued in relation to men (Cook 1999:40).

Discrimination against women started from the birth of a baby girl. The birth of a daughter in a Jewish family was a sad event. According to Ilan, various traditions testify to the fact that parents were often disappointed when a daughter was born. Ben Sira's text reads: "It is a disgrace to be a father of an undisciplined son, and the birth of a daughter is a loss."[48] Ilan quotes the *tannaitic* tradition which implicitly expresses the same thing: "Anyone who does not have a son is as if he is dead." According to the rabbinic mind, Abraham was blessed for the fact that he did not have daughters. From the viewpoint of that in Jewish society females did not have the same value as males. The fact that the Torah specified a longer period of ritual uncleanness of woman who gave birth to a girl confirms the idea (Ilan 1995:44-5). The rabbinic attitude toward women had a significant influence on the way the society considered women.

Scholars speculate about the possibility that some wealthy families taught the Torah to their daughters, but this is contested. There is a declaration attributed to a Rabbi, saying 'let the words of the Torah rather be destroyed by fire than imparted to a woman'. This implies that there were some women who were taught the Torah. Evans mentions the daughter of Rabbi Hannina ben Teradion and the wife of Rabbi Meir (Evans 2002:35-36). Witherington claims that "Rabbi Meir's wife, Beruriah, is well known in this regard. Possibly the maidservants of Rabbi Judah the Prince received similar training… Imma-Shalom, sister of Rabbi Gamaliel II and the wife was said to vex him because of her

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[48] The loss is believed to be financial, since parents had to provide a dowry for the girl, i.e. they had to pay money and goods in order to marry off their daughters honourably.

expertise in Jewish matters…Some women were able to become learned in both oral and written law and tradition" (Witherington 1995:7).

Although there were some exceptions, generally women did not have free access to the Torah as men did. Religious exclusion extended to priestly roles, as it was the requirement for a priest to be a male and to be holy and ritually clean at all times in order to offer sacrifice, and women were considered unclean during their monthly menstrual period (Witherington 1990). They were not eligible to take part in work required by the law, including feasts, the daily appearance in the synagogue, to make a quorum, periodic prayer and so on (Witherington 1990:9). The treatment of women then from the rabbinic view and the Jewish law had a visible impact and influence on the general condition of Jewish women in society.

The foregoing discussion suggests that there was not much difference between the general condition of Jewish women and their sisters in the broader Mediterranean region of the Greco-Roman world. Jewish women in the Diaspora and even in Palestine were not isolated from the thought and behaviour patterns of the Hellenistic period. If all of Judaism, in both the Diaspora and the land of Israel, was Hellenized, the Jewish culture had its own impact on the condition of women. The effects of this culture were carried over by those who passed from Judaism to Christianity as is often apparent in the New Testament writings.

5.4.4 Women's condition in the light of the New Testament writings

This section deals with women's condition and involvement in Christianity in the Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean region. Special attention is given to women from the Jewish background as Christianity originated from that culture. But women from other backgrounds are spoken about briefly, especially concerning their involvement in the early church.

One way of looking into the life condition of women during Jesus' time is to observe the New Testament writings closely.[49] Those writings concentrate on the person and ministry of Jesus Christ who is considered as the founder of the Christian movement. The New Testament period speaks much about him. His life greatly influenced his society and the people around him. Consideration of the lives of his contemporaries, especially women, will reveal the impact his attitude and teachings had on them in the midst of the patriarchal Jewish society of that period.

Spencer (2004) addresses the condition of women in the early Christian community, basing his analysis primarily on the books of Luke-Acts. He asserts that in the structure of the Christian community, conventional gender roles remained fixed. Women constituted the passive hearing sector of the community, thoroughly subordinate to male authority and discourse. Women's voice was not heard; rather male's voice and authority dominated and women were subject to that power. It is oserved that in the book of Acts, which describes the deeds of the early church, men dominated all the speeches and assumed each of the key leadership positions. Even in the Gospel of Luke, according to Spencer, women are neither entitled equal rights nor are they emancipated. For instance, Spencer argues that in Luke 2:36ff Anna was specifically labelled as a prophet but we hear only a brief, third-person summary of her proclamation. Anna is "dramatically overshadowed by Simeon, trice anointed with the Spirit whose mouth pours amazing words of praise and prophecy to the young Jesus and his parents in the preceding scene", that is in Luke 2:28-35 (Spencer 2004: 145-146).

Looking into the circumstances of the that time, one can argue that Jewish women were more oppressed and isolated than other groups of women in the ancient world. Spencer notes that some of the women's actions were noticed, such as the services of their hands and purses (Luke 4:38-39; 7:11-16; 10; 38-42 etc.) but when women did other noticeable work, it was rendered insignificant. An example is Mary Magdalene and others at the tomb as the first witnesses of the resurrection. Their report was dismissed by (male)

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[49] There will not be, however, sections dedicated to the plight of women in all the writings of the New Testament books. That is beyond the scope of this research work. Only the view of women in the Fourth Gospel is provided. In addition, this research work is based on selected sections in the Gospel of John.

disciples who were more visible (Spencer 2004:6). Bauckham explains the attitude of these males saying that in the ancient world, especially Jewish Palestine, the testimony of women was widely regarded as unreliable and untrustworthy (Bauckham 2002:257-258).

The condition of women and their lower status is confirmed in the letters attributed to Paul, with his prohibiting women to teach or take any authority in the church in 1 Timothy 2:12 and in the letter to the Corinthian church. Some scholars interpret Paul's words of prohibiting women from taking some responsibilities in the church to be aimed at addressing specific issues in the church. Others believe that Paul was motivated by the view that the women's lack of education would result in them wasting the congregation's time by asking 'foolish' questions. Because of the lack of education and their portrayal in such patriarchal society women were discriminated against; they were not given much opportunity to exercise the peacemaking role. They were not allowed to be involved in prominent offices of leadership where they could perform work of justice or unity-building according to the law. They could only perform a peacemaking role indirectly in their families, especially through their husbands, as they could not voice their opinion publicly. The example of women being peacemakers despite their culture may be illustrated by Pilate's wife who tried to speak for Jesus' rescue through her husband. She tried to warn her husband to be careful in the way he treated Jesus, for she had understood that Jesus was an innocent man (Matthew 27:19). Pilate did not comply with his wife's intention, however. Zuck notes that Pilate had to protect his interests, that he was obliged to make a decision which favoured his reputation. Pilate realized that he was getting nowhere with the crowd, and their entreaty to report him to Caesar concerned him. "His record with Caesar was not good, and did not want word of arrival king to reach Caesar's ears, especially if Pilate had realized that king" (Walvoord and Zuck 1983:87). Pilate chose to overlook the message of his wife in order to protect his interests (Walvoord and Zuck 1983:87). Herod's action reflects the thinking of undermining his wife's ideas, which may be seen in the view of the above interpretation of Paul's writings where women's ideas are considered as a waste of time.

Looking analytically into both arguments about the interpretation of the biblical texts, each reveals aspects of a culture which was undermining women. These texts reflect a culture which was not promoting women's education, and which favoured men's domination over women. They reflect a society characterized by the lack of gender equality. These examples illustrate Brown's words about the Bible: "The phenomenon of cultural relativity, with the adaptations it imposes, is repeatedly within the Bible itself" (Brown 1997:182).

Hence, the New Testament writings portray a culture where women and men were not equal despite what Brown describes as a 'breakthrough' in Galatians 3:28 Reacting against the view of scholars who charge Paul or the author of 1 Timothy 2 with assuming the social order of patriarchy and of attempting to impose that pattern on the church, Brown points to that breakthrough in Galatians 3:28 where it reads: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all in Christ Jesus." Brown argues that this verse "has often been viewed as not merely requiring the abolition of slavery, but also of all vestiges of patriarchy or of sexism, as well as of nationalism and perhaps of ethnicity" (Brown 1997:206). The passage is set against the ancient Jewish culture which displayed discrimination against women in all most of sectors of the society.

5.5 Summary

Considering what women were allowed to do, the offices they could hold, responsibilities they were allowed to carry and their place in the Jewish community, most occupations outside the sphere of the home were limited to men. It was argued in this chapter that women were excluded from valuable domains of their societies due to fixed social and cultural customs and distorted views of their abilities. They were denied most privileges even in the religious sphere. Although few women seem to have been actively involved in their communities, their contribution was very limited even during the time of Jesus. Daniel-Rops summarizes the story of women's condition saying that, "The rank that the society had assigned to her (a woman) was inferior from every point of view" (Daniel-Rops 1962:128). The culture was hostile towards women's working outside of the home, though it was observed that some women with high social standing from elite families,

especially Roman citizens, enjoyed some privileges and were able to work in the public realm. This enabled them to go beyond the general avenue of contributing in the economy of the nation through the domestic domain. Some women, especially Roman women, who had inherited riches from their fathers and few who were doing small businesses, like small commerce etc, could contributing to the national economy beyond the family sector.

The condition of women in the Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean region in the first century A.D however was almost the same for all women whether Roman, Greek or Jewish. They were all considered inferior to men and did not enjoy the same advantages as men. This is reflected in the education and the kind of works assigned to males and females. Jewish women's plight was even worse compared to other women.

After examining the condition of women in that society it is easy to assume that women did not contribute much in terms of peacemaking and peace-building outside of their homes. But despite the lack of official space for women to exercise their role of peacemaking and unity building at the national level, the following chapter shows that some women played important roles in that domain in another way. The chapter uses the distantiation phase of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model in its exegesis, and will point out specific cases of women who were agents of reconciliation and peacemaking in their societies. These women are found in selected biblical texts from the Fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER 6. DISTANTIATION: THE EXEGETICAL MOVE ON THE SELECTED TEXTS IN JOHN

6.0 Introduction

According to the theoretical framework which is guiding this thesis, the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, the current chapter falls under the phase of distantiation. This chapter will focus on selected passages from the Gospel of John where women are among the main characters and are portrayed in their involvement in managing or solving conflicts in their communities. The chapter does not attempt a complete exegesis of every selected passage. For the most part the discussion is restricted to the critical issues that have a direct bearing on the characterization of women in their peace-making role. Distantiation is a phase where the text is given time to speak from its own context. However, the context of conflict of the Rwandan women who are in dialogue with the biblical text offers the topic for the dialogue. In other words, my "ideological orientation", which my context of conflict instigated my ideological commitment (West 2009254). It prompts the dialogue and suggests to John's Gospel the main issues that are the object of the discussion. The context of conflict has governed my focus on the women's role of peacemaking and reconciliation in John's Gospel. Therefore, in this work the prevailing topic put towards the narrative revolves around conflict.

In the preceding sections we studied the context of the text, the Gospel of John, and located it in the broader context of the whole Mediterranean region. In this chapter, the distantiation phase, the direct setting of the selected texts that deal with women is considered in the attempt to understand each text. Various types of research have been carried out on this Gospel,[50] including those that involve prominent female characters. But the current chapter intends to approach the Gospel from the perspective of reconciliation, which, to my knowledge, has not been undertaken before. It proposes to

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[50] Indeed various types of research have been carried out on the Gospel of John. However, this chapter looks into the Gospel from a different perspective of women as peacemakers. Thus, there will be interaction with an extensive literature which will facilitate my dialogue with the text from the vew of peace and reconciliation. These include commentaries on the Gospel of John, Dictinaries and various books written on the Gospel. Because of the nature of nalyisis of the texts, there will be an extensive use of Greek text especially when analysing some key words, key sentences or key themes; some times there will be also some French followed by the English maning for a balanced understanding of the chapter.

examine some of the texts that speak about women from the perspective of peacemaking and reconciliation. The focus will be on women's roles in resolving or preventing conflicts and in restoring good relationships in their communities. The objective is to interact with texts in which women may be considered agents of peace, unity and harmony in their communities.

The discussion is based on five texts.[51] The first text to be analyzed examines the role of the mother of Jesus at the Cana wedding in John 2:1-12 together with her role at the cross in John 19:25-27. The next text, John 4:1-42, reports the story of the Samaritan woman. The third text is John 11:1-45 in which Mary and Martha are among the main characters. The chapter will also look at John 18:17 about the role of the woman gatekeeper who denounced Peter, the disciple of Jesus.

The analysis of each text is guided by Malbon's narrative literary criticism model, which is detailed in chapter two dealing with the methodology. Attention is paid to the way various literary patterns enable the text to communicate its meaning to the hearers/readers (Malbon 2000:17). The first analysis deals with the wedding at Cana, focusing on the characterization of the mother of Jesus in this account and then her role at the cross. The Cana narrative has been often linked with an episode in the passion narrative, namely John 19:25-27 that shares with the Cana narrative a number of theological motifs, including the presence of the mother of Jesus. In both episodes she is addressed as "γύναι". The two episodes shed light on each other with respect to the characterization of Jesus' mother.

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[51] This work does not analyze all the texts which speak about women. It is interested in texts that speak about the role of women from the perspective of building peace and unity in their community. This is demonstrated in their capacity to manage conflict and to side with the victims, or their failure to do so like the gate-keeper. The woman in John chapter 8, the passage contested to be an addition not originally from John, was not selected because the woman is a victim. Nor does this work analyze the text of chapter 20:10-18 which speaks about Mary Magdalene at the tomb. Mary Magdalene is seen as a woman who might have played an important role of mission by obeying Jesus' command to convey the message of the resurrection (Moloney 1998:527). Neyrey supports this idea, saying that "Jesus sent her to an elite group in a speaking capacity with a specific message…She is authorized to speak, and in this regard she is similar to the disciples whom Jesus sends to retain or release sins…" (Neyrey 2009:48-49). Despite her significant role, it does not fit into the objectives of peacemaking and unity building which is the focus of the present study.

6.1 Jesus' mother at the Cana wedding: John 2:1-12

Starting from the text analyzing the Cana wedding, this section will discuss the location of the passage in the Gospel of John. It will also look into the structure of the text and point out the major ideas presented by the author.

6.1.1 Location of John 2:1-12 in the Fourth Gospel

The structure of the Gospel of John has been delineated in various ways by scholars who identify different parts that make up this Gospel. For instance, the wedding at Cana is found in the part designated as the revelation of *Doxa* (glory) to the world, known as the Book of Signs. Besides the changing of water into wine, this part reports six other signs: the healing of the official's son (4:46-52), the healing of the paralytic (5:1-9), the multiplication of loaves (6:1-14), the walking on water (6:16-21), the healing of the blind man (9:1-12) and the raising of Lazarus (11:17-47). Ridderbos considers the word sign "σημεῖον" in John as linked with wonders "τέρατα". For him the term "sign" has the meaning of 'miraculous act' (Ridderbos 1997:113). For Walvoord, a miracle is also a 'wonder' "τέρας", a 'power' "δύναμις", and a 'strange event' "παράδοξος". Walvoord believes, however, that the Fourth Gospel writer used the word 'sign' "σημεῖον" (v.11) because "he was seeking to draw attention away from the miracles and to point rather to their significance (Walvoord and Zuck 1983:278). Hendriksen notes, however, that the term "σημεῖον" is used more often by John than the other Gospel writers. He believes that the term "sign" has a deep meaning, signifying a physical illustration of a spiritual principle determined by the context. But he emphasizes one thing about the sign: he argues that the sign points away from itself to the one who performs it (Hendriksen 1979:117). Here I am in substantial agreement with Walvood and Hendriksen.

These signs work rhetorically as credentials supporting the wonderworker's claim to enjoy God's favour (Neyrey 2007:65). The narrative about the first sign fits well into this purpose as confirmed by the suggested its outcome (verse 11). Before examining the sign itself, the next section surveys its setting.

6.1.2. Setting of John 2:1-12

The present study approaches the story from the perspective of conflict resolution. It is therefore important to pay attention to the setting of the story because, as Vlassenroot indicates, conflict is better understood in its social setting. The context of the conflict helps to know its roots and understand why and how people turn to it (Vlassenroot 2006:49). The information about the geographical location matters a great deal for the understanding of the role of Jesus' mother, particularly for Rwandan readers. The features of the setting of this story include the geographical setting, the time setting and the literary setting.

6.1.2.1 Geographical setting of John 2:1-12

Features of the geographical setting in this narrative are introduced in terms of Malbon's literary question 'where?' The geographical setting is a key factor in entering the world of the text, which is its mimetic axis of representation (Fowler 1991:55).[2] The narrator specifies that the event took place at Cana of Galilee. In the New Testament, Cana is only mentioned in the Fourth Gospel; there is no mention of it in the synoptic gospels. The Fourth Gospel reports two miracles by Jesus at Cana. The first happened in this wedding; the second was the healing of the official's son whom Jesus healed from a distance without touching him (John 4:46-50). Howard-Brook observes that the geographical site of Cana is unique to the Fourth Gospel, mentioned in 2:1-11, in 4:46-54 and in 21:2 as the home of Nathanael (Howard-Brook 1994:77). Cana is identified as a place where the glory of the Son of man took shape in the miracle of the abundance of wine (Ridderbos 1997:97).

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[2] The mimetic axis of representation and the rhetorical axis of communication are two metaphors of axis developed by Paul Hernadi (1976). However, these are not the innovation of Hernadi. They were the product of Abraham, and were later developed by Jacobson. Hernadi then picked up and clarified the two intersecting axes of the diagram. He identified them as the rhetoric axis of communication and mimetic axis of representation (Fowler 1991:55-56). Thus, the mimetic axis of representation in the narrative criticism together with the use of "where" suggested by Malbon's narrative criticism serve as key factors in entering the world of the text, pointing to geographical features needed for the understanding of our texts.

The exact location of Cana where the wedding took place is not agreed upon by scholars. In Brown's view, four villages in Galilee are candidates for the biblical Cana: Kafr Kanna, Kenet-Jalil, Ain Kana and Qana Lebanone (Brown 1984:98). But the details of the true Cana among the suggested four regions is not the real concern of this work. The significance of Cana for this work results from its being located, not in a big city, but in a small town in Galilee which may be viewed as conservative in terms of culture. Howard-Brook agrees that not much is said about the Cana location but he also situates it in the region of Galilee and locates it in a rural area far away from the city of Jerusalem. He states, "Jesus begins his activity not in the headquarters of the Law, not in the centre of religious world of Israel, but on the obscure margins, hidden, quiet, yet inviting" (Howard-Brook 1994: 78).

Besides the geographical location, a brief examination into the circumstances that surround the text and/or are involved in the text is also needed. These circumstances or events provide the immediate context or literary setting of the text.

6.1.2.2 Literary setting and rhetoric of John 2:1-12

At the beginning of the gospel, the prologue in chapter one, Jesus is passive. He begins to be active from John 1:37. The attention that the narrator reserves for the selection of the disciples, and later on, their presence at the wedding (John 2:2), and the effect of the sign upon them displays their importance for this text. The selection of the disciples in chapter one prepares for the Cana sign at the beginning of John chapter two. The story of the Cana wedding in John 2:1-12 is linked chronologically and materially to the events narrated in the preceding pericopes (1:19-51) by the phrase on "Καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτη": and *on the third day*. The narrator seems to suggest that the wedding in Cana reported in the story occurred on the third day after the events narrated in 1:43-51. In John 2:1-12, Jesus performs a sign which stirs the faith of the disciples. The narrator's statement: "This is the beginning of the signs Jesus did in Cana and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in Him" (verse 11), emphasizes the disciples' new way of knowing their master because of the sign. The sign of the water turned into wine at Cana marks a start with what in the preceding pericope, John 1:50-51, Jesus had offered in prospect as

"great things". Köstenberger seems to agree with the argument by suggesting that the events of 1:19-2:12 are perceived as forming a coherent unit describing the first week of Jesus' ministry (Köstenberger 2004: 89).

The wedding story is also linked with a series of accounts described as a great cycle which begins at Cana, proceeds via Capernaum to Jerusalem and returns via Samaria to Cana (Ridderbos 1997:97). These stories report the filling of the old jars of ritual purification with the new wine (verses 6-9), immediately followed by the Temple narrative where a statement alludes to the destruction of the Temple and its replacement by the body of the newly risen Lord (John 19-21). This "replacement theme" appears in the Nicodemus story where Jesus introduces the idea of new birth for new creation (3:1-21) as well as in the contrast between the water of Jacob's well and the living water from Christ, and the worship of Jerusalem and Gerizim with the worship "in spirit and in truth" (4:1-24). The "replacement theme" in these successive stories conveys what Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:15 - that the old has gone, the new has come (Carson 1991:166).

By describing the Cana story as the beginning of signs (verse 11), the narrator implies that this story is to be connected to the signs that will follow. Equally significant is Jesus' reference to his hour, the first of nine references to Jesus' hour/time reported in this Gospel (Kruse 2003:62). The reference to hour in the wedding story is seen as an internal prolepsis, referring to a theme that will be developed later, or to an event that will occur later in the narrative (Carson 1991:171). Jesus' hour is generally understood to refer to the time of his suffering, death, resurrection and exaltation to glory (Köstenberger 2004:95). The mention of the hour here alerts the reader to anticipate the arrival of Jesus' time at a later point in the narrative. It links the present story to the stories that develop the same theme in the "book of signs" (7:6, 8, 30; 8:20) and beyond (12:23; 13:1) especially in the farewell discourse (16:21; 17:1).

The role of Jesus' disciples as witnesses of his glory (1:14, 51), and thus founders of the coming church (cf. 20:31), is confirmed emphatically here (2:11) (Ridderbos 1997:99). Moreover, the author creates a sense of familiarity with Jesus' divine nature, later

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referred to when Jesus is active in Jerusalem (verses 15-16). The author uses the Cana sign to prepare the reader to understand the power of Jesus who, in the coming story will confront the sellers in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus' glory manifested at Cana prepares the reader to understand his bold attitude at the cleansing of the Temple. Moreover, the wedding sign, placed before the sign in Jerusalem, allows Jesus to secure the trust of his disciples before he faces the challenges of the leaders (2:13-23). The focus of the present study is on the wedding sign reported in John 2:1-12 and the significance of the role played there by the mother of Jesus. The analysis of this text requires paying attention to its inner structure.

6.1.4   Structure of John 2:1-12

The passage of John 2:1-12 has been outlined differently depending on the different perspectives from which it is approached. In Ngewa's analysis, the text could be organized for the purpose of a sermon (Ngewa 2003:64) with the following sections:

- The setting: guests are invited to a wedding (2:1-2)
- The problem: there is shortage of wine (2:3)
- The solution: the mother intervenes and Jesus acts (2:4-10)
- The results: the glory is revealed and the disciples believe (2:12) (Ngewa 2003:64)

Schnackenburg proposed a division of the text based on the changing roles of the characters, or the variations in the *dramatis personae* (Brodie 1993:171). Brodie criticizes scholars such as Schnackenburg who divide the text into three main scenes, omitting the disciples but emphasizing the mother and Jesus, Jesus and the servants, and the steward and the bridegroom. Brodie proposes the division of the text into two parts. The first part (verses 1-5) emphasizes the idea of time. In this part Jesus says to his mother that his hour has not yet come and she speaks to the servants as if something is about to happen. The second part (verses 6-10) centres on the idea of a secret mystery. The steward does not know where the wine came from and he tells the bridegroom: "You have kept the good wine until now" (verse10c).

The present study examines the main characters and the way they relate among themselves in a crisis that a woman among them helps to resolve. From this perspective, the following analysis of John 2:1-12 pays attention to the characters, but the main focus is centred on Jesus' mother whose role motivates what is happening in the story. The structure of the analysis comprises the following parts:

A Setting: Jesus, his mother, his disciples in Cana (John 2:1-2)

    B Crisis and failed intervention (John 2:3-4)

        C Successful intervention - Jesus acts (John 2:5-8)

    B` Crisis averted by successful intervention (John 2:9-10)

A` Setting: Jesus, his mother, his brothers and his disciples leave Cana for Capernaum (John 2:11-12).

Apart from the setting in the introduction (**A**) and the epilogue (**A`**) where the narrator reports and the characters are silent, the main parts of the story are made up of successive scenes in which the characters interact. All the scenes are united to form one plot.

6.1.4 Plot

The movement of the plot starts with the announcement of the occasion of the story, a wedding, implying that a number of guests are gathered (verses 1-2). A few of them are identified; others are implied. Then immediately follows the announcement of a crisis: there is shortage of wine (verse 3a). The mother's reporting the problem to Jesus (verse 3b) inspires some hope for a possible solution, especially as Jesus was introduced in the preceding chapter as endowed with divine power (1:19-51). The hope for an immediate solution soon fades away, however, and the crisis is complicated as Jesus, asserting his independence from his mother's influence, declares that he does not want to be involved (verse 4). The attitude of the mother and her advice to the servants (verse 5), however, inspires a feeling of hope. The tension is relieved, but the reader is curious to know whether Jesus' "panacea" will work. The suspense ends as the master of the banquet

tastes the water and the reader is informed that it had been made into excellent wine (verses 9-10). The crisis is totally resolved. The epilogue comments about the aftermath of the resolved crisis (verses 11-12). It is this movement of the plot that guides the exposition of the text.

6.1.5 Exploration of the plot of John 2:1-12

This section analyses successive scenes of the narrative, paying attention to its time setting and main characters. Following the introduction above that addressed the question 'where?', the exposition will continue with the occasion of the story introduced by the literary questions 'when?', after which the literary question 'who?' will facilitate the interaction with the main characters. Although Jesus is a main character, special attention is paid to the attitude of his mother and her role in resolving a crisis. The contribution of this woman to peace-building will initiate a dialogue with questions of how the peace-building role of women in the Rwandan context can be established. The analysis starts with a description of the setting of the occasion and the events reported in the story.

6.1.5.1 A. **Setting: Jesus, his mother, his disciples in Cana (John 2:1-2)**

The story opens with its temporal setting. The event reported happened on the third day (verse 1). The exact meaning of this "third day", τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ has puzzled many commentators. In the chronology of the preceding events, the first day covers the events of 1:1-28; the next day 1:29-39; probably another day 1:40-42; the next day 1:43-51 (Kruse 2003:91). With these preceding events already structured around four days, the reference in 2:1 seems not to build on the count of days in chapter 1 and is clearly not the third day of Jesus' activity. The reference cannot be to a particular day of the wedding on which Jesus and his disciples arrived, since it is the wedding that is said to be on the third day (Keener 2003:496). It seems that the narrator situated the wedding on the third day of or after something; the question is, what is that 'something' that is used as a reference.

One way of reading the text is by counting "the third day" from the last event narrated, namely Jesus' encounter with Nathanael (1:43-51). Various theological interpretations for "the third day" have been suggested (Neyrey 2007:62-64; Whitacre 1999:77; see also

Keener 2003:496-498; and Ridderbos 1997:102-103). To Ridderbos, there is not sufficient ground to ascribe to "the third day" any other meaning than that it serves to establish a direct historical and material connection between the story that follows and what has taken place two days earlier between Jesus and Nathanael (Ridderbos 1997:103). However, he seems to forget the third day of Jesus' resurrection. It can also refer the third day of the wedding as in ancient Israel a wedding took place on Tuesdays after the Sabbath. "The third day" then can possibly point to the day Jesus rose again from the dead. In terms of our structure for the pericope, the settings (A and A`), known also as the Prologue and Epilogue, both serve to link the disciples with Jesus' mother, which seems to be an important part of his theological purpose, as we shall see in our analysis of 19:20-30.

On the third day there was a wedding. It is this wedding that provides the immediate setting to the story. The wedding is not the story though, it is only the occasion of the event narrated. Few details are provided about the wedding itself. The names of the wedded couple and the families involved are not disclosed. It seems that, according to the custom, wedding celebrations normally lasted for seven days (Keener 2003:499). The narrator's interest is not in what happened during all those days but on an event that occurred on one particular day of the wedding. The wedding, which serves to explain the need for wine, is also the reason for the presence of people at the venue. But not all the guests are equally relevant to the story the narrator wants to tell. Only those who are active in the event are singled out and their actions reported, as it is discussed below.

6.1.5.1.1 The mother of Jesus

The mother of Jesus is introduced in a way that makes her a principal actor in the event. It is she who is first mentioned at the beginning of the story. This is a significant detail since the introductory verses could have been written in any number of ways (Brodie 1993:174). In fact, it is unusual to introduce such an event and start with the presence of a woman, especially in that society during that time where women were marginalized. But her presence at the venue of the event is the first detail provided about the wedding, an indication that she is likely to be at the centre of the story. The mother of Jesus is not

named anywhere in the Gospel of John. Much has been said about the omission of her name.[52]

Hendriksen believes that the author is reserved in terms of naming some people because of blood ties. The author is consistent in not mentioning the name of the woman who was probably his aunt (the sister of his mother, Salome). Throughout the gospel, he leaves himself and his close relatives anonymous (Hendriksen 1979:114). In Witherington's opinion the phrase 'the mother of Jesus' is almost a technical term of John. To him this phrase is an honourable title for a woman who has borne a son; it implies no veneration of Mary's person, but focuses on her role (Witheringtion 1990:89). Similarly Malina suggests that referring to this woman as the "mother of Jesus" was giving her an honorific title, referring, with respect, to a woman who has borne a son (Malina 1998:66). This explanation is validated by a similar practice in many African countries where mothers are called by the names of their children, their eldest sons preferably. Nortijé-Meyer has noted that Jesus' mother's identity is always established by her relationship to Jesus and therefore her maternal role is her defining characteristic (Nortijé-Mayer 2009:126-131). However, as we shall see, the defining characteristic here is her role in peace-making; her maternal role is specifically ruled out by Jesus as the ground on which he is willing to act.

Many scholars have noted the symbolic significance of the mother of Jesus in this story. The Cana story has been used to substantiate the historic bond between Judaism and Christianity. From this perspective, the mother of Jesus in the Cana story symbolized Judaism as the womb of Christianity (Bechtel 1996:254). Bechtel provides an elaborate allegorical interpretation of the Cana story, showing how the mother of Jesus represents Judaism. The mother of Jesus is an "insider" while Jesus and his disciples are invited "outsiders". Jesus, a Jew, descends from Judaism, so his mother, his matrix, is Judaism. Throughout the dialogue, Jesus breaks his tie with Jewish tradition (verse 4) but does not

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[52] It is important to notice that church dogma has played a role in how the question of the omission of Jesus' mother's name is interpreted. For instance Roman Catholic scholars have tended to emphasize the role of Mary, while in this case the Protestant scholars are overly concerned to rule out the possibility of the veneration of May. However, my concern is not with either of these positions, but with John's understanding of the role of Jesus' mother in peace-making and reconciliation.

reject it outright. At the end of the gospel, the mother of Jesus is standing at the cross and Jesus' words to her (19:26-27) mean that Judaism continues to be the mother of Christianity (Bechtel 1996:241-255). However, Bechtel makes invalid assumptions about the existence of "Judaism" and "Christianity" at the time of the writing of the gospel. There is no evidence that any "great divide" between Judaism and Christianity had taken place in the first century C.E. and there is some evidence that John has an "inner Jewish" perspective all through (Draper 2000). In any case, as we have argued already, 'Jew' should be understood geographically as 'Judean'. But the present work is attracted by the exceptional faith of Jesus' mother at Cana and her extraordinary power of mediation and intercession. Feuillet explains this view as follows:

> *N'est-ce pas en effet à sa demande que Jésus inaugure la grande série des signes de son œuvre messianique, signes qui annoncent le remplacement de l'économie ancienne par celle de l'ère de grâce? Et c'est à titre de nouvelle Eve (La femme) qu'elle joue ce rôle. En outre par la foie exemplaire de Marie s'est trouvée définitivement raffermie celle de tout les premier disciples de Jésus venues aux noces de Cana (cf. ll, 11 ; ses disciples crurent en lui ; Jean se garde bien de nous dire : Marie crut en lui) si bien que Marie apparaît déjà ici comme leur mère spirituelle, la nouvelle Mère des vivants (Gen, lll, 20), donnée que nous retrouverons plus loin en John. xix, 25-27* (Feuillet 1986 : 370).

> Is it not actually in answer to her request that Jesus inaugurates a great series of signs of his messianic work, signs that announce the replacement of the old dispensation by the era of grace? And it is in her capacity as the new Eve (the woman) that she plays that role. Moreover, by Mary's exemplary faith, the faith of Jesus' first disciples who had come to the wedding of Cana was strengthened (cf. ll, 11; his disciples believed in him; John is careful not to tell us: Mary believed in him) so that Mary already appears here as their spiritual mother, the new Mother of the living (Gen. 3:20), a fact that we shall find again in John 19:25-27 (Feuillet 1986:370).

In Feuillet's opinion, the Cana account is about the messianic wedding of Jesus. He sees in it a close association of Jesus' mother with his messianic work in her capacity of "new Eve". Feuillet finds, especially in the comment about the strengthening of the disciples' faith, an implicit reference to a new community of believers (verses 11-12) - pointing to the foundation of the future church (Feuillet:1986:389). Feuillet believes that the mother of Jesus, addressed as 'woman" in the Cana account (verse 4) and at the foot of the cross

(John 19:26), is the "woman" spoken about in Genesis 3:16, often called the *protoevangelion*, and that she is the same "woman" referred to in Revelation chapter 12. In Genesis and in Revelation, she is the new Eve who participates in the victory over the Old Serpent; in the Cana story and at the cross, she is the spiritual mother of the new community of believers (Feuillet 1986:552).[53]

A similar interpretation is suggested by Brown who, in many details, agrees with Feullet's analysis of the Cana account, but distances himself from the Mariological emphasis that according to Brown, remains at the level of pious exegesis (Brown 1966:107). Like Feuillet, however, Brown finds important parallels shared by four biblical scenes using the "woman" as a symbolic figure. In the Johannine corpus, the mother of Jesus referred to as the "woman" is associated with Jesus' disciples. At Cana her action is in the context of the completion of the call of the disciples. At the foot of the cross, the "woman" is made the mother of the Beloved Disciple, the model Christian, and so she is given offspring to protect. These two scenes described in John are linked with the symbolic figure of a "woman" described in Revelation 12 as a key figure in the drama of salvation (Brown 1966:107). The birth pangs mentioned in Genesis 3:16 and in Revelation 12 may be associated with the death of Jesus, while the woman's other offspring against whom the dragon makes war, the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), is not only the Messiah, but includes the wider group of an old and renewed Israel (Brown 1966:108).

As the foregoing discussion indicates, the woman in the Cana narrative is perceived to be a symbolic figure. For this work however, she is the mother of Jesus and the importance of her role in the narrative is grounded on her relationship with Jesus. The beginning of the story portrays her in her blood relationship with Jesus. In our interpretation, on the basis of this blood relationship, she attempts and fails to influence her son into action. At

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[53] Feuillet's interpretation that points to Jesus' mother as the 'new Eve' is problematic since the terminology of the "garden" and a "woman in the garden" occurs only in connection with Mary Magdalene speaking to Jesus at the garden tomb. Echoes with Genesis are legitimate there but not here. In this work, the emphasis in not on scholars' interpretation of 'the woman'; the focus is on the way the evangelist portrays her in terms of her relationship with Jesus and the role she played in preventing conflict at the Cana wedding.

the end of the story she has become a member of a new community where she relates with Jesus on the basis of faith.

6.1.5.1.2 Jesus at Cana the wedding

After his mother, Jesus is the next character to be introduced, together with his disciples (verse 2). In her symbolic interpretation of this passage, Bechtel has noted that the mother of Jesus did not need to be invited to the wedding, being an insider. Jesus is not invited with his mother; he is associated with the disciples rather than with his parents. The mention of the disciples may indicate a role they play in the story, but at this stage the attention is not on them but on Jesus and his mother. The repeated reference to Jesus' mother in this account reminds the reader that though some believers in the evangelist's time had started hinting at his divine origin (1:29-51), Jesus still had an earthly family. By the same token, this observation raises some questions about the silence on the whereabouts of the father.

It is noted that the author of the Fourth Gospel does not provide any information regarding the process by which Jesus became a human being (how the Word "became flesh"). Although at the beginning of the gospel the author mentions twice that Joseph is the father (John 1:45; 6:42), he proceeds with accounts of Jesus with his mother in other occasions during Jesus' ministry without any mention of his father's presence with them. The observation is that Joseph is a passive father who is never reported being with his son. The absence of information about an active father in Jesus' life in John's Gospel has led some scholars to assume the possibility of Jesus' fatherlessness. For instance, Howard-Brook and Lee argue that while the Fourth Gospel refers to God as Jesus' Father approximately one hundred and nineteen times, it refers to his earthly father only twice (Howard-Brook 1999:1; Lee 2002:112). Van Aarde concurs with the fatherlessness of Jesus by suggesting that Joseph was not part of Jesus' life because he was either dead or had abandoned the family (Van Aarde 2001:112-7).

The discussion of the issue of Jesus' fatherlessness is beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say that the silence about Jesus' father in the story under examination

suggests that his absence gives more room to the mother, the only parent present, to be close to the son, to enjoy his undivided attention, and eventually to influence him without interference.

Having described the setting of the story and presented the main characters that will have key roles to play, the narrator then reports the successive scenes that make up the story. The first two scenes focus on the intervention of Jesus' mother (verses 3-5). The narrator then describes the specific setting (verse 6) preparing for the intervention of Jesus whose action (verses 7-8) and its result (verses 9-10) are the object of the last scenes. All starts with the intervention of the mother.

6.1.5.2 B. Crisis and failed intervention: (John 2:3-4).

The mother's intervention is reported in two scenes. In the first, Jesus' mother reports the crisis to her son who then declares his unwillingness to be involved. In the second scene the mother speaks to the servants showing that she still believes that Jesus will do something.

6.1.5.2.1 The mother attempts to influence the son (verse 3)

Having described the setting and introduced the main characters, the narrator reports the crisis that consists of the shortage of wine (verse 3). In Jewish thought, wine is a symbol of joy and celebration, as Köstenberger observes: "There is no rejoicing save with wine (*b*. *Pesah*. 109 a). At a cultural level, running out of wine was considered to be a major social faux pas, since the host was responsible to provide the wedding guests with wine for seven days. There may even have been legal obligations" (Köstenberger 2004:93). The fact that the family hosting the wedding has run out of wine threatens a serious loss of honour. Friends, especially those from the inner group of wedding celebrants, usually sent gifts, such as wine, ahead of time to be available for the wedding celebration. Lack of wine thus implies lack of friends (Malina 1998:66), or poverty, both of which were damaging to the reputation of the host. Keener evaluates the possible implications of such a crisis to the reputation of the groom in the following words:

What is more certain is that the groom was facing a potential social stigma that could make him the talk of his guests for years to come. Wine was important to any properly hosted public celebration, and wedding guests sometimes drank late into the night…. Nevertheless, in Jewish culture, it was customary to have food left over at weddings, that is, never come close to running out, and proper hospitality toward wedding guests was so crucial that *t. B. Qam.* 7:8 includes among thieves 'He who presses his fellow to come as a high guest but does not intend to receive him properly' (Keener 2003:503).

Of all the people present, both those identified and implied, it is the mother of Jesus who is credited with realizing the gravity of the situation and who takes the initiative to do something about it. Some traditions hold that the mother of Jesus was a kinswoman of the groom (Brown 1966:66).[54] In this capacity, she would be well positioned to be informed about the problem. Thus, the relationship between her family and that of the bridegroom obliged her to take action to relieve their embarrassment (Kruse 2003:92). Even without this assumed relationship, it is not surprising that Jesus' mother knows that the wine is short, because she, along with most of the other women, would be involved in the food preparation for the celebration (Malina 1998:66). Similarly, Keener observes that women sometimes have access to privileged information not spoken in the company of men, and (perhaps more relevant here) women were typically in charge of food preparation (Keener 2003:503). For the narrator, it is not important how this woman was informed about the problem, but the initiative she took toward finding a solution. She confronts her son with the problem.

She said to Jesus, Οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν: "They have no wine" (verse 3). Her statement does not look like a request. Some commentators see no evidence in Mary's statement of the expectation of a miracle (Brown 1966:98). Keener admits the possibility that Jesus' mother's words, "they have no wine" could be read as an accusation: having brought his disciples but inadequate gifts to defray the expenses of the wedding, Jesus and his followers are partly at fault for the wine running out (Keener 2003:502). Whitacre, following Rutman (1970:232-234), believes also that the unexpected presence of Jesus

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[54] According to Brown, there is an apocryphal tradition that says Mary was the aunt of the bridegroom who is identified in an early 3rd century Latin preface as John son of Zebedee. This is associated with the tradition that Salome, wife of Zebedee and mother of John, was Mary's sister, a relationship that makes John the cousin of Jesus.

and his disciples at the wedding may account for the wine shortage (Whitacre 1999:78). This observation could not apply in traditional Rwandan culture where, though gifts from neighbours and friends are surely expected in ceremonies of this kind, the host remains solely responsible for providing enough drinks for the guests and the shortage of drinks cannot be blamed on anyone else. In fact, Whitacre looks at the statement of Jesus' mother not as an accusation against him but as an implied request to him (1999:78).

Other scholars see an explicit request in the mother's statement. These include Keener whose understanding of this mother's attitude is summarized in the following words:

> Simply stating the need, as she does, is an adequately explicit request; as in 2:5, she acts on the presumption that Jesus will grant her request. This is comparable to reports of the chutzpah of faith in other women and men in the Hebrew Bible[55] and in the Gospel tradition;[56] the bold request of the grieving Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, in John 11:32 (Keener 2003:503).

In Ridderbos' opinion, it is evident from Jesus' negative response that his mother appeals to him for help. Her directions to the servants in verse 5 shows that she has unlimited confidence in his capacity to provide that help. Why she entertained that confidence in her son's abilities is not explained. Kruse, who surmises that the arrival of Jesus and his disciples may have caused the embarrassing shortage of wine, suggests that the mother knew she could turn to her son in time of need, and that there was an obligation resting upon him also to do something about it (Kruse 2003:92). Kruse argues that the mother was confident that her son would listen to her simply because she was his mother. Kruse's argument evokes the kind of mother's influence stemming from blood relation and/or parental authority and the resulting son's respect, such as has often been seen in past and contemporary political leadership. In Rwandan history, such kinds of influence allowed queen-mothers and other close relatives to wield considerable influence over the kings, to the extent of sometimes dictating to the monarchs what to do. In contemporary

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[55] Keener cites, in comparison, the cases of Jacob in Genesis 32:26-30; Moses in Exodus 33:12-34:39; the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4:14-28; Elisha in 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6, 9; and Elijah in 1 Kings 18:36-37, 41-46.
[56] Here Keener refers to the case of the woman with an issue of blood in Mark 5:27-34; the Syro-Phoenician woman in Mark 7:24-30; the blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-51; and the centurion in Matthew 8:7-13.

democracies, the basis of influence has gone beyond blood relations to include what Rwandans call "*ikimenyane*" (bias based on acquaintances or connections). The influence of family and friends, and their meddling in leadership and decision-making, results in nepotism and patrimony.

Readers, especially those from the Rwandan context, would surely note that Jesus' mother may have capitalized on her influence as a mother over her son. It seems that the bond between mother and son is the closest interpersonal relation known in the Middle East. It is generally much closer than that of husband and wife. Hence, the mother of Jesus could entertain the idea that she was in a position to presume upon Jesus to act as patron on behalf of this family (Malina 1998:67). The perception of Jesus as a patron is to be understood against the background of the social stratification prevailing in the first century Mediterranean societies. One aspect of this social situation was that the people of this world did not understand themselves in the modern Western individualistic model. Individuals did not survive on each one's own merits, but by being connected to networks: family, friends, brokers, and patrons (Hanson and Oakaman 1998:70). A patron was an elite person (male or female) who could provide benefits to others on a personal basis, due to a combination of superior power, influence, reputation, position, and wealth. The beneficiaries of the patron's services were called his/her clients. In return, clients offered their honour, loyalty and support to their patrons. This could be expressed in performing tasks, collecting information, spreading rumours, backing the patron in factional fights, or attending funerals (Hanson 1998:71). The gap between patrons and clients was often bridged by intermediaries, the brokers, who made the connection between interested parties for their mutual benefit.

Elsewhere in the Gospel of John, Jesus is perceived as a patron (Mbamalu 2010:59-64). Following is Hanson's description of Andrew as a broker between Jesus, the patron, and outsiders, the clients:

> After encountering Jesus for the first time, Andrew negotiates the meeting between Jesus and his brother Simon (John 1:35-42). Being followed by a huge crowd across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus ponders how to feed them. Philip is at a

loss, but Andrew finds a young boy with meagre provisions and brings him to Jesus (6:5-8). And finally, when a group of "Greeks" (presumably hellenized Israelites from outside Palestine) want to meet Jesus, they ask Philip to make the arrangements, and Philip asks Andrew (12:20-22). Andrew consequently is depicted as recruiting faction members (Simon) and people with resources needed by the group (the boy with food), as well as the one to make formal introduction of outsiders to Jesus (the "Greeks"). These are functions of an efficient broker (Hanson 1998:80).

At the Cana wedding, it is Jesus' mother who behaves as a broker, expecting Jesus to assert his position as the patron. Malina comments:

> In relaying the concern about wine to Jesus, his mother plays the role of broker on behalf of the bridegroom and his family. The (implied) request to Jesus (which may have come from a discreet member of the family) would be a challenge to his honour if his mother's request had come in public. By informing Jesus about the shortage of wine, his mother appears to be asking him to play the role of a "wedding associate" in providing for the host family being threatened with humiliation (Malina 1998:67).

In the context of patronage as described by Hanson, Jesus' mother could be more than a mere broker. Being his mother qualified her to enjoy a share in her son's power, honour and prestige. Power, in the ancient world, was not the rule of one individual over other individuals, but a family exercising control over other families (Hanson 1998:81). As the mother of the patron, she could hope to enjoy benefits ranging from considerable power similar to that wielded by queen-mothers in Rwanda and elsewhere, to material privileges open to kinspeople of the patron as it is observed in contemporary patrimonial regimes. The narrator does not stress such ambition on the side of Jesus' mother; what is clear is that the mother attempted to use her blood relationship with Jesus to influence him to make use of his power and provide for needy friends as patrons did. But Jesus' address, τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί γύναι portrays a rhetorical effect of distancing himself from the blood kinship on which his mother wished to base her request. The tone of his answer to his mother's request indicates his intention to distance himself from such an interfering exercise of special influence.

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6.1.5.2.2 The son resists the mother's influence (verse 4)

Jesus' answer to his mother, "τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὔπω ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου" (verse 4), rendered literally "what (is it) to me and to you, woman? My hour has not yet come", has attracted the attention of commentators. The words of Jesus' response, "τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί," often rendered "what have I to do with you?" or "why do you involve me?" or "what does your concern have to do with me?" connote a sharp rejection of his mother's request. The expression "τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί,", which is found elsewhere in the New Testament in Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:24; 5:7; Luke 8:28 and in the Septuagint in Judges 11:12; 2 Samuel 16:10; 1 Kings 17:18; 2 Kings 3:13; 2 Chronicles 35:21, always indicates some sort of confrontation or rebuke (Kruse 2003:92). Bechtel reads in this statement an expression of lack of relationship, outright discord or hostility. In Bechtel's symbolic interpretation, the expression here means the breaking of Jesus' relationship with Judaism (Bechtel 1996:249), but as we have seen earlier, this goes beyond the evidence of the text.

The expression "τί ἐμοὶ καὶ Σοί," is Semitic and occurs often in situations in which failing to mind one's own business, so to speak, is considered objectionable. Although in itself it did not contain anything offensive, materially it has the intent of a sharp reprimand (Ridderbos 1997:105). In view of the prominent role assigned to honouring one's parent in Judaism (and indeed in ancient Mediterranean in general), observes Keener, Jesus is establishing a degree of distance between himself and his mother, as did the Jesus of the Synoptic tradition (Keener 20:505). The distance that Jesus establishes between him and his mother is even apparent in the way he addresses her, with the vocative "γύναι".

Apart from the symbolic interpretation seen above that attempts to explain the use of "woman" in this and other passages, the vocative "γύναι" used by Jesus for his mother sound harsh. The NIV rendering "dear woman" instead of "woman" looks like an attempt to soften the address. It is sometimes argued that the address "γύναι" does not necessarily connote impoliteness or coldness. Its use in 19:26 is referred to by those who claim that it was normal (Kruse 2003:92) and was characteristic of Jesus as it appears in 4:21; 8:11;

19:25; 20:13; Luke 13:10 (Malina 1998:67). In Keener's opinion, however, one might be more apt to address one's mother with a title like "κυρία", a respectful title for a woman of rank (Keener 2003:504). Ridderbos admits that in the social context of the time, the address "woman" was in itself certainly not impolite. But as the address of a son to his mother it is not common and may seem distant and impersonal (Ridderbos 1997:105). In the context of the present account, the narrator seems not to expect his reader to understand the address "γύναι" as Jesus' usual way of addressing his mother. The narrator's emphasis is rather on the distance that Jesus took from his mother. Such distance expressed in the address "γύναι" is already understood in the rebuking words "τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί" and is finally expressed in Jesus' apparently negative answer to his mother. Jesus is not favourable to his mother's request, and the reason he gives is that his time has not yet come.

The enigmatic words "οὔπω ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου" "my hour has not yet come" are understood by many as referring to the time of Jesus' glorification. Kruse has noted nine references to Jesus' "ὥρα" in the Gospel of John (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1). The first three references indicate that Jesus' hour had not yet come; the last four indicate that the hour had come (Kruse 2003:92). In Kruse's opinion, the hour towards which everything moves is the hour of Jesus' glorification, which takes place through his death, resurrection and glorification (Kruse 2003:92). Whitacre seems to agree with Kruse, suggesting that this hour is a reference to Jesus' death and the events that follow (John 23:1; 17:1). Those who know the whole story, Whitacre contends, realize that Jesus is saying all of his ministry, even his signs in Galilee, are to be understood as done under the shadow of the cross, resurrection and ascension (Whitacre 1999:79).

The interpretation of "ὥρα" in this passage, as the "hour of the beginning" is not Ridderbos' innovation. It seems that the Greek Fathers understood the term to refer to the hour of the first miracle (Brown 1966:100). Writing long before Ridderbos, Brown rejected such an interpretation which he found running against the rest of the Johannine use of the term and was refuted by the reiteration in 7:6, 8, 30 and 8:20, that Jesus' time had not yet come (Brown 1966:100). Most scholars agree that the "hour" here refers to

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hour of the cross. It is noteworthy, observes Keener, that Jesus will again in this Gospel address his mother as "γύναι" when, from the cross, he finally will care to her earthly needs (19:26). Jesus could ultimately care for her needs only in his "hour" when he would care for her not only physically but especially as a saviour (Keener 2003:507). In fact, Jesus' time for drinking wine was at the cross. Jesus did not welcome his mother's request to behave as a patron, which he said was presented at a wrong time. There was an appropriate time for Jesus to perform the kind of work that his mother was asking him to do; until that time, Jesus would not do such work just because his mother requested it. He remained independent from his mother's influence.

Jesus' answer to his mother brings an end to the first scene. The dialogue between Jesus and his mother ends on a worrying note. There is a complication in the plot. The hope of seeing the crisis resolved diminishes, jeopardized by Jesus' negative answer. But immediately the reader learns that all is not lost because the mother of Jesus has not given up hope. The next scene describes her as a mother who believes that her son will do something to save the situation.

6.1.5.2.3 C. Successful intervention: Jesus' mother's faith transcends blood relationship: Jesus acts: John 2:5-8.

After her talk with her son, Jesus' mother turns to the servants. Her words to the servants, "Whatever he says to you do it" (verse 5), indicates that she is still acting and hoping to arrive at a solution to the problem. In Whitacre's opinion, Jesus' mother saying this to the servants shows that she had not understood what Jesus said. Whitacre explains the attitude of Jesus' mother in the following words:

> His saying has gone over her head. It sounds like it is slightly, or even completely negative, but since she does not know what this "hour" is, she cannot be really sure of what he means. She continues her request for him to do something about the problem, but she does so in a way that leaves him entirely free to respond as he wills (Whitacre 1999:79).

Understanding Jesus' mother's attitude differently from Whitacre, Keener sees in this attitude a display of the "holy chutzpah" demonstrated in 2:3; in 2:5 she bids the servants

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to do whatever Jesus says, thus both recognizing Jesus' authority and demonstrating her expectation that he is going to do something to change the situation (Keener 2003:509). Kruse concurs with Keener, arguing that Jesus' mother did not regard her son's response as a refusal of her implied request and that she knew she could turn to her son in a time of need, though she also knew to leave things to him once she had made the need known (Kruse 2003:92). It may be argued that the mother of Jesus has learnt that her son is not under her control, but she still believed that the time will come when he would act. Though she does not have authority over Jesus, she does express her faith (Köstenberger 2004:95).

This scene is dominated by Jesus' mother, the main actor. The servants are passive characters who listen to instructions. Despite her shortcomings, Jesus' mother ultimately functions as a model of faith, which is a prior component as well as the result of the sign that Jesus is to perform, although her faith is not yet informed by an understanding of the cross (Keener 2003:509). Jesus' mother is portrayed, not as holding or exercising power to resolve the crisis, but as involving the one who can bring a solution. Having reported the problem to Jesus who has power to solve the problem, she now prepares the servants, whose obedience is necessary, to properly follow instructions for achieving the solution. The necessity to speak to the servants appears reasonable. She was aware of two things: a. That otherwise it might seem strange that waiters should receive orders from a guest; and b. That what Jesus would order these attendants to do would, perhaps, even seem foolish, so that they might not have been willing to do it (Hendriksen 1979:116). The words of Jesus' mother to the servants revive the hope and curiosity for the reader who is told that something is going to be done. This expectation is strengthened by the description provided by the narrator in verse 6, preparing for the next scene where Jesus intervenes.

Before reporting the next scene, the narrator describes the setting for what is going to follow in order to solve the problem of shortage of wine; it will require the presence of enough containers. The narrator introduces the containers: ἦσαν δὲ ἐκεῖ λίθιναι ὑδρίαι ἓξ, there were six water pots of stone (verse 6). The presence of these λίθιναι ὑδρίαι ἓξ

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at the venue is justified by a ritual of purification required in Judean traditions (Malina 1998:68).[57] Symbolic interpretations have been suggested for the six water pots of stone.[58] The reader who was informed about the presence of six water pots is prepared to hear their role in the story which comes with the next scene where Jesus enters into the action.

6.1.5.3 Jesus' mother's transcendence of kinship ties, a key to the resolution of the crisis (verses 7-8)

The scene opens with Jesus' instructions to the servants who are told to fill the water pots with water (verse 7). After his sharp rejection of his mother's request, Jesus is apparently acting just as the mother had thought (verse 5). Jesus' response to requests with delaying reluctance followed by compliance is not peculiar to this story. The pattern is attested in John 4:46-54; 7:2-14; and 11:1-16. All these cases seem to have something in common as pointed out by Malina:

> It is interesting to note that all these requests come from in-group persons whose in-group status derives from birth or natural position: mother, town-mate, brothers, closest friends. Yet it is only after a display of reluctance that Jesus eventually complies with their requests and immediately afterward engages Judeans in further conflict. In "straight" society as opposed to antisociety, these in-group persons all deserve and receive immediate compliance. These in-group persons define one's collective self and are really alter egos. Perhaps John uses this pattern to inform members of his group about how to deal with their relatives and other natural in-group persons (Malina 1998:68).

Malina's observation is an important one and it is consistent with view of this work that a peace-maker has first to transcend any dependence on blood ties and personal influence

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[57] Most village families would have had no more than one jar (which held about twenty gallons). The presence of six stone jars indicates that others may have been borrowed from neighbours for the occasion (Malina 1998:68).

[58] Some, for example, found allusion to Torah in λίθιναι (Keener 2003:509). Others saw a contrast between the law given through Moses and the new messianic provision through Jesus (Köstenberger 2004:97). Most scholars note that under Levitical law stone jars could not become contaminated so they were preferred over earthen jars that could be ritually contaminated and would have to be broken (Brown 1966:100). That the water pots associated with ritual purity were used for a new purpose is another example of the replacement theme (Keener 2003:509). This hypothesis is supported by Jones who believes that the narrator purposely provided a thorough description of these vessels, in contrast with the terse statements in the surrounding material, because every detail provided has a symbolic meaning (Jones 1997:58).

in order to play a positive role in crisis resolving. In the present case, Jesus' attitude may be understood as an assertion of his sovereignty and independence from human ties. In telling his mother that his time has not yet come, he indicated that human ties cannot determine how he will act; neither were his services to the people based on a patron/client relationship. If he was to respond to the need, he would do so not because of the intercession of his mother based on blood relationship but because he himself has determined the appropriate action (Jones 1997:57). In placing distance between himself and his mother, Jesus wanted the mother to learn that her relationship to Jesus as a disciple was more important than her relationship to him as mother (Keener 2003:506). Thus, before he could intervene as 'his mother' had requested, Jesus created an obstacle to challenge her to transcend the blood ties and to act from another level, the spiritual ties manifested by faith.

Her faith is expanded to the servants; mindful of Jesus' mother's advice, the servants obey and fill the water pots to the brim.[59] The second instruction from Jesus to the servants was to draw some water (or wine) out and to take it to the master of the banquet (verse 8). The narrator does not report the details about the performance of the miracle that changed the water into wine.[60] In Köstenberger's opinion, somewhere between 2:7 and 2:8, Jesus must have turned the water into wine, because here the servants are told to draw some water (or so they thought) and to bring it to the "master of the banquet"

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[59] Filling the water pots to the brim has been interpreted symbolically in reference to the gospel's depiction of Jesus as the one who is able to provide amply, spiritually (10:10) as well as materially, and the one who "gives the Spirit without measure" (Keener 2003:513). For the reader of this story, however, the magnitude of the miracle to follow is more straightforward (Kruse 2003:93). Filling the waterpots to the brim may also prove the impossibility of deception or fraud (Köstenberger 2004:97).

[60] Köstenberger notes the Johannine pattern of implying movement without actually narrating it. He gives a number of examples such as: 5:10, where the Jewish leaders challenging the healed lame man appear out of nowhere; 5:17 and 5:19, where Jesus is shown to respond to charges never made explicit; 6:10, where compliance with Jesus' command to have the people sit down is assumed but not stated; 6:69, where reference is made to Jesus' teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum though his arrival there has not previously been narrated; 9:7, where the movement of the man born blind are traced while Jesus fades from view; 11:16, where Thomas exhorts his fellow disciples to join him in going to Judea to die with Jesus, with the ensuing verse recording the group's arrival, but no reference being made to the actual departure or journey; 11:14, where the reader has to assume that some of the bystanders comply with Jesus' directive to take Lazarus' grave clothes off and let him go (note the shift signaled in both 11:16 and 11:44); 12:20, where the Greeks are shown to arrive, but their subsequent departure is not mentioned; Jesus' hearing before Pilate, where there are certain gaps in the narration of these two characters' movement (e.g. 19:5, 9); and 20:11, where Mary stands outside the tomb crying, without previous record of her approach (Köstenberger 2004:97).

(Köstenberger 2004:97). The servants are obedient throughout this story. The narrator does not even inform the reader whether the servants tasted the wine before taking it to their master. In Kruse's opinion, their obedience showed implicit faith in Jesus' word (Kruse 2003:93). But it is easier to understand that these servants were persuaded by the advice of Jesus' mother to do whatever her son would tell them. It was easier for the servants to see Jesus as just one of the many guests without any ground to give instructions. Besides, the kind of instructions he gave them could not have made much sense, but the mother had prepared them. In obeying Jesus' mother they did the right thing and contributed to saving their master from embarrassment, as it is proved in the last scene.

6.1.5.4 Β` Crisis averted after successful intervention: The hosts are saved from public shame (verses 9-10)

As the servants move from Jesus to the master of the banquet, the suspense increases but the plot moves towards the end of the crisis as the master of the banquet tastes the drink brought to him by the servants and the reader is informed that it had become wine (verse 9). The crisis is resolved. The master of the banquet, who was under threat of being confused and shamed by the shortage of wine, now marvels at the abundance of wine of a superior quality (verse 10). It is now confirmed to the reader that, despite his initial negative answer to his mother's request, Jesus finally responded favourably to her request.[61]

The title of the steward is τὸ ἀρχιτρικλίνος meaning the governor of the feast or, according to Keener, "ruler of the table" (Keener 2003:514). His role is compared to that of a person who, in Greek custom, presided over the entertainment and determined the degree to which wine would be diluted (Keener 2003:514). Apparently, the master of the

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[61] A pattern whereby Jesus responds negatively to a request before acting positively has been noted especially in the Gospel of John (4:47-50; 7:3-10; 11:3-7). Each instance, suggests Köstenberger, is wedded to misunderstanding regarding the arrival of Jesus' "time" (Köstenberger 2004:97; Neyrey 2007:66). In the case of Jesus' mother's request, it may be that the primary reason of the rebuff was that she did not understand what this sign will cost Jesus: it starts him on the road to his hour, the cross. John speaks of the beginning of Jesus' sign, referring to the beginning of a public ministry destined to culminate in his final hour (Keener 2003:506).

banquet did not join the wedding party at the table but rather, as a headwaiter in charge of catering, supervised the serving of food and drink, with several servants under him carrying out his orders (Köstenberger 2004:97).

It is not clear whether the master of the banquet was initially aware of the problem; only by virtue of his position it may be surmised that he was among those who could notice that the wine was running short. What is clear is that he was not aware of the work of negotiation and persuasion done by Jesus' mother until he was presented with the result. The master of banquet did not know where the wine came from, but he recognized that it was of superior quality.

The steward's ignorance of where the wine came from renders unquestionable the genuineness of the miracle. It is on account of his unbiased ignorance that he addresses not Jesus but the bridegroom as the person solely responsible for the wine supply and makes known his astonishment at the course of action that has been followed (Ridderbos 1997:108). The steward of the feast declared, for those at the feast and for the reader, that what has taken place lies beyond the realm of previous experience. Jesus offered something new to the celebrants at Cana and to the reader of the Fourth Gospel (Jones 1997:61). In Jewish literature, wine was often used as a symbol of the messianic age. The wine offered by Jesus at Cana is often understood in this same way. In Feuillet's understanding: *Le vin surabondant et d'une qualité extraordinaire procuré à Cana par la vertu divine de Jésus signifie la surabondance et l'excellence des biens messianiques liés à l'ère nouvelle qu'il veut instaurer* (Feuillet 1986:371), meaning: "The plentiful wine of extraordinary quality provided at Cana by Jesus' divine virtue signifies the abundance and excellence of the messianic things associated with the new era that he wants to bring about".

Koester observes that several writings spoke of an outpouring of divine favour upon Israel, saying that "the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it" and sometimes connecting abundant wine with the restoration of Davidic rule (Amos 9:11, 13; cf. Joel 3:18; Isaiah 25:6). Jewish traditions associated this outpouring of wine

with the advent of the messiah (Koester 2003:84). Koester also notes that according to the Law, a ruler was to come from the tribe of Judah: "Binding his foil to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes" (Genesis 49:10-11). According to this analysis, the Cana sign was a demonstration of Jesus' messiahship.

At last, the narrator mentions the presence of a bridegroom who comes at the end of the story and has no active role to play. This is an indication that the story is not about the wedding, but about a crisis miraculously resolved by Jesus at the instigation of his mother. It is not only the host and his guests who benefited from Jesus mother's shrewdness; even Jesus had his own share, as is indicated in the epilogue.

6.1.5.5 A`. Setting: Jesus, his mother, his brothers and his disciples leave Cana for Capernaum (verses 11-12)

The transformation of water into wine is presented as the first sign. The narrator highlights two points with respect to the significance of the event. First, in performing this sign Jesus revealed his glory. The glory was revealed both in his ability to change water to wine, and also in his grace in providing an abundance of quality wine to spare the bridegroom shame and loss of face (Kruse 2003:93). The revelation of Jesus' glory is explicitly presented as the ultimate result of this sign. Feuillet argues that in the Cana event, attention is not on the miraculous character of the change of water into wine but the unique role prophetically assigned to Jesus in the history of salvation, and the subsequent manifestation of his divine glory (Feuillet 1986:365).

Second, the disciples put their faith in him (verse 11). The sign that the disciples saw was part of what had been earlier referred to as "greater things" (1:50). The story mentions or implies the presence of many people who witnessed the sign, but a in the prologue where only the disciples are mentioned alongside Jesus and his mother, in the epilogue, only the disciples are reported to believe. This is probably because they are those who were with him from the beginning as appointed witnesses of his glory (cf. 15:27). The narrator locates the Cana sign in the context of the call of the disciples. By emphasizing the

reaction of belief on the part of the disciples, the evangelist shows that he has not forgotten the theme of evolving discipleship that was elaborated in chapter 1, which focuses on living out the message of the new community. The new community is not dominated by kinship and blood ties; Jesus then at the Cana wedding is starting to create a new community of faith. At the end of the narrative, the mother is mentioned in the company of the disciples whose faith she has contributed to strengthen (verse 12), thus participating in building up a new community of believers. After the transcendence of kinship and blood ties, she became part of a wider community which is not based on human ties. The story ends with the main actors leaving the venue now accompanied by Jesus' brothers. They are going to Capernaum (verse 12).

6.1.6 Jesus' mother at Cana (John 2:1-11) and at the cross (John 19:25-29)

At Cana Jesus was requested by his mother to enter into action but he declared that his the time has not yet come. As observed above, it is often understood that Jesus was referring to the time of his death on the cross and subsequent resurrection and ascension. He was asked to provide wine at Cana, but his time for drinking wine was at the cross after he had committed his mother to the care of the Beloved Disciple (19:28-30). It is reported that the end result of the Cana sign was the manifestation of Jesus' glory (verse 11), yet the appointed time for Jesus' glorification was the time of his death and resurrection.

At Cana, Jesus addressed his mother with the vocative "γύναι" asserting, as we have seen in our analysis of 2:1-12, his independence from her influence based on blood relations. At the cross, when the decisive hour has come, he will use the same address, still distancing himself from blood ties that his mother had attempted to use at Cana. At the foot of the cross Jesus' mother is told that from now on she will be a mother in a relationship of a different kind. In a "hand-over" declaration expressed in Jesus' words to his mother: "Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου" and to the Beloved disciple: "ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου", (Jn 19:26-27), Jesus' mother is now designated to be a mother in a new fictive family, based on a new community of Jesus' disciples. Jesus' mother is now brought under the care of the Beloved Disciple (verse 27). She is embedded into a new relationship of being the

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mother of the new community. Carson describes the change of relationship initiated by Jesus at the cross in the following words:

> In John 2:11, Mary approaches Jesus as a mother and is somewhat rebuffed. If she demonstrates the first signs of faith, it must be the faith of a disciple, not a mother. Here she stands near the cross with other disciples, and once she has assumed that stance she may be again assigned a role as a mother – but not as mother of Jesus, but of another fellow-disciple (Carson 1991:618).

Different suggestions have been made about the symbolic theological significance of this relationship. These include the perception of the woman and the Beloved Disciple as representative of male and female unity in the Johannine community, an indication of Jesus' success in bringing together bonds of blood and faith in a single unity. Howard-Brook estimates that Jesus uses the power of the cross to form new relationships (Howard-Brook 1994:422). So in changing the relationship that the mother and the Beloved Disciple have to one another, Jesus is completing the formation of the community which is seen to be a new family. It is only at this point that he drinks the wine and having received the wine, he said, "It is accomplished, τετελεσται" (19:27).

The theological importance of Jesus' entrusting his mother to a disciple rather than to unbelieving siblings fits well with the Synoptic tradition also (see Mark 3:33-35). This model suggests that the ties of the believing community must be stronger than natural familial bonds (Keener 2003:1145). Earlier Jesus' mother attempted to take an active part before the decisive hour on the ground of her blood relations with Jesus, but she was rebuked for this. Now she is invited to take an active part in the new community where faith rather than blood relationship matters. Her efforts at restoring harmony at Cana were flawed by her reliance on blood relationship. In the new community she can be part of a more harmonious society where subjective considerations are overcome. The characterization of Jesus' mother in the Gospel of John offers some ground for reflection on the issue of women's contribution in solving conflicts and restoring harmony in the society.

6.1.6.1 Women's involvement in conflict resolution: insights from Jesus' mother

The characterization of Jesus' mother, especially in the Cana story, hints at some strengths, limitations and challenges, with respect to women's involvement in the restoration of harmony in their communities. Despite her underlined difficulties concerning blood kinship (John 1:12), Jesus' mother displayed potential to help in resolving crises. Her willingness to transcend these ties and act as a bridge-builder enables Jesus to begin establishing the new community built on faith, the new fictive kinship, between her and the Beloved Disciple at the cross. This is the moment of his "glory" when his hour has come and he drinks the sow wine on the cross, bows his head and "hands over the spirit" (παρεδωκεν το πνευμα) – which could simply mean, "he died", but in the context it implies much more (19:30).

6.1.6.1.1 Women's potentialities in solving crises: awareness of the problem

In the Cana story, the mother of Jesus reports the crisis to the one she believes could solve it. She knows about the problem long before those who were supposed to be in charge, namely, the bridegroom and the master of the feast, become aware of it. This is in keeping with daily experience that confirms women's ability to gain access to information and to share it. In the context of the Cana story, it can be noted that the servants were in a good position to know about the shortage of wine. Therefore, it can be assumed that it was very easy for this information to reach the master of the feast who supervised them. Soon or later, this man who was directly concerned was to be informed. But before this happened, a woman knew about the crisis and initiated its solution.

For any crisis to be solved it needs to be identified. Jesus' mother's role in this story is mainly preventing a crisis from developing into an open cause for shame and feuding between the newly connected families. Women may face challenges preventing them from actively participating in conflict resolution in their communities, but generally they can at least notice the problem and report it as a first step. The capacity to be aware of the problem at its lower stage helps to deal with it before it causes a great deal of damage. As seen above in the chapter on theories of conflict resolution, any conflict is better understood when it is seen within its social setting at its lower stage. Thus, women's

awareness of the problem before its spreads in the community agrees with Vlassenroot's opinion that the context of the conflict helps to appreciate its roots and to understand why and how people turn to it (Vlassenroot 2006:49). The mother of Jesus used that capacity and became a mediator in resolving the crisis at Cana.[62]

6.1.6.1.2 Women's potentialities in solving crises: women's influence

In the case of the Cana story, Jesus' mother might have appeared powerless in the presence of the crisis. But she resolved to attempt to approach someone one she believed to be in a position to do something. Women are seen to be less physically strong as men, sometimes they do not hold positions of power, but they still have ability to influence the decisions of men around them. The Bible is replete with stories of women who managed to influence the decisions of men, some for noble causes, and others for selfish motives.

The power of women's influence over men around them is still a reality today. That influence can be used to promote harmony in the community. Jesus' mother was certainly aware of the power of her influence on the one who had authority to accomplish what she could not do. But she was rebuked for such an approach and was encouraged to adopt another way, moving beyond the exercise of influence based on blood relationship. Jesus then revisited his consideration and honoured her request.

6.1.6.1.3 The transcendence of kinship and blood ties: Jesus' mother at the foot of the cross

It is noticed above that Jesus' mother was the first person to notice the threatening problem of the shortage of wine. The narrator does not say how she knew about that the situation of crisis. The focus is on the way she became instrumental in overcoming the problem. Being aware of the threatening crisis, she tried to use her influence based on her relationship with Jesus, but he disapproved of such kind of influence based on kinship. His address to her as γυναι opened her eyes to another kind of relationship, which is faith. Her willingness to comply with the ideas of transcending the influence motivated

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[62] More details about the importance of women's faculty of awareness of the problem at its lower level in their community will be elaborated in the next chapter during the appropriation phase.

by human ties meant she could help to prevent conflict at the wedding, saving the hosting family and the new couple from public shame. The influence based on blood relationship was rejected because of its narrow range, which produces a very narrow result. As seen above with Rwandan culture, women exercise influence over their sons and husbands but when the conflict expands to the level of involving the whole community or the country as a whole, the results of the mother/wife's influence are insignificant. Jesus wanted to promote a kind of influence from his mother which would help a wider range of people.

At the foot of the cross, Jesus confirmed his emphasis on the transcendence of blood ties and kinship as an effective tool for conflict resolution. Ignoring his blood siblings, he confided his mother to the sibling connected to the mother and to Jesus by faith (John 19:27), "εἶτα λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ· ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ σου. καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας ἔλαβεν ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια". The author emphasizes the act of the disciple that he took her *into his own*, εἰς τὰ ἴδια. This phrase may refer to the disciples own 'people', not necessarily to his own 'house' as it is translated. Since that time, Jesus' mother became part of the other community, which may be referred to as the community of faith that the disciple is representing. In that wider community, the role of Jesus' mother will be even greater; her influence is no longer limited to her blood relationships. She then fulfils Jesus' wish of transcending the narrow sphere of blood ties and kinship. In this respect, Jesus' mother mirrors the situation of many contemporary women whose role of peacemaking and reconciliation is limited because of focusing on the narrow community of their kinships. The ability to transcend the blood relationship is required for the expansion of their contribution to peace-building and reconciliation in the wider sphere of their communities and nations.

6.1.7 Summary

The story reported in John 2:1-12 is an account of Jesus' first sign. It is one of many stories in the gospel intended to persuade the readers of Jesus' messianic identity. The context of this sign is a crisis generated by the shortage of wine threatening to cause public shame to a host who has guests to entertain. In this crisis Jesus' mother is characterized as a heroic. Although she is not the one resolving the crisis because she

does not have the power to do so, she is very instrumental in finding the solution. The happy ending of the story depends much on her involvement. She is among the first to notice that there is a problem and she is the only one who initiated its solution.

At first however, she attempted to solve the problem by a request motivated by her influence on her son based on relationship, like any other woman who has a famous and respected son. She first thought that her relationship as his mother would be a key to the success of the request, but Jesus rejected that approach. Jesus' attitude displayed his refusal to be influenced by blood ties or patron and client relationship. By his reluctance, his mother was able to learn that her relationship with Jesus, as a disciple connected with him by faith, was greater than her blood relationship as mother. Thus, at the end she discovered a new way of approaching Jesus; she transcended the blood ties and acted from another level, which is through spiritual ties manifested by faith.

Having understood her new position in the faith, she was able to go further and help him in preparing the servants whose compliance was needed for Jesus to perform the miracle. The miracle that resolves the crisis is executed by the powerful Jesus but at the instigation of his wise mother. The boldness and wisdom of this woman benefited many; the guests had enough quality wine, the hosts were saved from shame and embarrassment, the disciples' faith was strengthened and Jesus was glorified. Not only the transcendence of the blood kinship opened the way for the miracle at Cana, but also at the foot of the cross Jesus' mother was officially proclaimed the mother in a new community, the community of faith. In the new community her role is even wider and greater than what she wanted to accomplish in the narrow and limited community of blood relations. She will be involved in the mediation of people beyond those related with her by only blood ties.

The following text to be analysed reports the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The analysis of this story will help us to strengthen the argument of the transcendence of kinship which started with Jesus' mother. Not only does the story of the Samaritan woman display transcendence of kinship and blood ties, it also exhibits

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transcendence of other human traditions such gender abuse, regional conflicts and gender divisions.

6.2 Jesus' discourse with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42)

6.2.0 Introduction

The text reports a dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, who, in some books is referred to as the Woman at the Well. As the dialogue unfolds, barriers existing between Judeans and Samaritans are exposed. The analysis of this passage focuses on the contribution of the Samaritan woman in bringing together some members of these estranged groups. As the dialogue unfolds, the barriers existing between Jews and Samaritans are exposed. The narrative will explore the positive attitude of Jesus which restored the dignity of the Samaritan woman, and how she responded to the exposure of his teachings. Her role in the text is the pivotal point for this analysis, as it will serve as a mirror for other women in their contribution to the well-being of their communities. To better understand their act of reconciliation, there is a need to clarify the context in which the woman and Jesus met for a better understanding of their act of reconciliation. This requires a brief focus on the conflict between the two social groups before examining the setting or location of the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

6.2.1 Conflict between Jews and Samaritans: the origin of the Samaritans

The primary purpose of this work is not to deal with the conflict between these two social groups. However, a brief look into their relationship matters in order to shed some light on the pivotal role of the Samaritan woman after her encounter with Jesus. It is argued that the main reason for the Judeans' rejection of Samaritans is rooted in the event narrated in 2 Kings 17. This story reports the conquest of Samaria by Assyria and the subsequent deportation of its inhabitants (2 Kings 17:5-6). The Assyrians are said to have conquered and exiled the people of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C.E., and repopulated the Samaritan region with people from throughout the empire. According to Burge, the remnant of the defeated Jews of the northern kingdom mixed with other conquered people like Persians and others (Burge 2000:140-1).

This hypothesis makes the Samaritans a mixed race, descending from two groups: "the remnant of the native Israelites who were not deported at the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C and the foreign colonists brought in from Babylonia and Media by Assyrian conquerors of Samaria" (Brown 1984:170). Seen as a mixture of different tribes, the Samaritans were no longer pure "Jews" (Pummer 1987:3). This mixture, Burge argues, rendered the land religiously impure (Burge 2000:140-1). From this view then, the Samaritans were considered by the Judean authorities as a different ethnic group. Judeans considered the Samaritans as defiled Gentiles, and so there was an ethnic barrier between them.

However, the Samaritans themselves claimed to be a branch of Israel, having Jacob as their ancestor like the Jews, tracing their origin back to the high priest Eli who withdrew from Shechem to establish a rival cult at Shiloh. Later on, Israelites expanded their control from Shiloh to Jerusalem through David and the Judean monarchy. They claimed then that they were true Israelites and that Samaritan worship was an authentic expression of the Israelite faith (Purvis 1968:88-9; Pummer 1987:3). There was much to justify their claim, since it is now accepted that ancient empires largely moved the ruling elite of conquered territories from one region to another to prevent them mobilizing revolt, while leaving the peasantry largely untouched to ensure continuing food production and hence to ensure their continued appropriation of the agricultural surplus. Maccoby, for instance, supports the idea by arguing that the Samaritans are Israelites who were left behind in northern Israel by the Assyrians, as the latter could not exile the whole population of Israel but a portion of it. However, he also argues that after a lapse of time, those Israelites left behind allied themselves with the "Jews" who returned from exile, not with the Gentile nations (Maccoby 1989:15).

However, the only written accounts we have of the return of the exiles from Babylonia is written by the Judean elite, who contested the control of other elites in Palestine in their restoration of a Judean temple state. They did not recognize the worship of those Israelites who continued the tradition of the Northern Kingdom to worship in temples outside of Jerusalem, and also challenged their racial purity. Thus, the identity and the

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religion of the Samaritans were contested by the Judeans who did not recognize the Samaritans as genuine Israelites nor as exercising true worship of Yahweh. It continued a history of conflict between the Northern Kingdom and Judea which began even before the Exile, as the Davidic monarchy attempted to centralize the worship of Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple under the control of the Judeans. The returning Judean exiles considered them as religious apostates and idol worshippers. For their part, the Samaritan elite (who had been put there as exiles themselves to rule the conquered Northern Kingdom) put obstacles in the way of the restoration of Jerusalem and the Judean monarchy, and later helped the Syrian rulers in their wars against the Jews in the second century B.C.E. (Brown 1984:170). In retaliation, the temple on Mount Gerizim was burnt down probably by the Hasmonean king John Hyrcanus when he conquered Samaria (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 13:254). Whitacre (1999:102), citing Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18:30, notes that Judean animosity toward the Samaritans was greatly intensified about twenty years before Jesus' ministry when some Samaritans reportedly defiled the temple in Jerusalem by scattering human bones in the courtyard during Passover.

The conflict between the Judeans and the Samaritans thus had regional, ethnic and religious aspects. The animosity was to the extent that the Judeans avoided passing through the Samaritan land let alone drink their water as Jesus wanted to do at the well. Thus, the background between these two groups is portrayed by quarrels and discrimination against the Samaritans on the part of the Judean Pharisees and their Rabbinic successors. They also ruled that Samaritan women should be deemed permanently unclean since their observance of the purity rules could not be guaranteed. Consequently all Samaritan men should likewise be deemed permanently unclean by virtue of their association with the women: "The daughters of the Samaritans are [deemed as] menstruants from their cradle; and the Samaritans convey uncleanness to what lies beneath them in like degree as [he that has a flux conveys uncleanness] to what lies above him, since they have connexion with menstruants" (*m. Niddah* 4:1, Danby 1933: 748).

Moreover, the Rabbis did not allow men and women to be in open contact in public: "He who talks much with womankind brings evil on himself. He neglects the study of the Law and at the last will inherit Gehenna" (*m. Aboth* 3:4, Danby 1933: 446). This is likely to have been true in the first century C.E. also. Given that situation, it was surprising to see Jesus break that tradition by taking the route through Samaria as the author narrates in the text.

6.2.2 Location of John 4:1-42 in the Fourth Gospel

The current account is located in the first part of the Gospel described as the "Book of Signs" as the previous story. Although in this episode Jesus is not reported as performing a sign, and his encounter with the Samaritan woman has not been counted among the signs recorded in this part of the Gospel, the event still culminates in more people believing in him (verses 39-42). The story of John 4:1-42 fits well in Bultmann's description of the first part of the gospel as the revelation of the *Doxa* (glory) to the world (Bultmann 1951). The setting of the passage corroborates this description.

6.2.3 Setting of John 4:1-42

Before looking at the literary setting of the story, it is important to pay attention to its geographical setting, answering Malbon's question, "where?" to provide information about the location of the event. The relevance of location and time is also emphasized by Draper, though he speaks of the context as a whole and not just the geographical setting.

> During this phase the exegete of the text needs to allow the text be itself in its origin and social location, with the goal of reconstructing it in its original context. The exegete or the reader seeks to understand the historical setting of the text in order to proceed to the reconstruction of its meaning to its original audience. This is done in order to avoid influencing the biblical meaning by his/her presuppositions and prejudices (Draper 2001:156).

Thus, it is necessary to be aware of the geographical, literary and historical setting in order to understand the event in the text in its original context and its meaning to its original audience.

6.2.3.1 Geographical setting of John 4:1-42

Draper's estimate above is that the reader/interpreter of the text needs to allow the text be itself in its origin and social location, with the goal of reconstructing it in its original context. The author of John 4:1-42 provides the information about the place of the event: "Now he (Jesus) had to go through Samaria" (verse 4). Charlesworth notes that Samaria is a region in the heart of Palestine which is not spoken about often especially in the synoptic gospels. While Matthew refers to it only once and in a negative way (Matthew 10:5), Mark does not even mention it. Luke (9:51-56) speaks of Samaria pointing to the lack of hospitality of the Samaritans.[63] Only John (4:42) clearly reports an intensive encounter between Jesus and the region of Samaria (Charlesworth 2006:393-394).

Jesus came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the piece of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. The πηγή[64] of Jacob was there, and Jesus, tired sat down by the well. The text suggests that the meeting took place in Samaria near the city of Sychar. However the true location of Sychar is uncertain for today's scholars as it is shown by their arguments (Köstenberger 2004:146; Ridderberbos 1997:153; Burge 2000:141). The narrator leaves a gap in his account in his reference to a well. But the historical information behind the geographical detail is not the major concern of the present study; more important is the submission of the narrator that Jesus met with a Samaritan woman at a well in a "Samaritan location". The literary setting of this account provides an additional clue to what the author intended to communicate to his readers.

6.2.3.2 Literary setting of John 4:1-42

The setting of this text is established in terms of some important events centred on Jesus prior to this text and following it. Burge classifies this text as belonging to a literary unit

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[63] Samaria occupies a pivotal role in Luke's account of the spread of the gospel beyond Judaea and Galilee: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria and away to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "Salvation history" passes through Samaria to the Gentiles, an intermediate phase. As the exposition of the plot unfolds Samaria again plays this intermediary role in the spread of the gospel and that the woman is the key to that. John says of the journey through Samaria that "He left Judaea and went again into Galilee. But/and it was necessary (ἔδει δέ) for him to go through Samaria" (4:3-4). More detail and various views of scholars about ἔδει δέ will be provided in a later discussion.

[64] This story alludes to two types of water, the πηγή (static water) and φρέαρ (running water). More details about this will be given in the next section on the use of these two types of water.

of John 2:1-4:54, which he describes as "a series of probing in which Jesus' messianic presence overwhelms some features or institutions of Judaism" (Burge 2000:139). Keener suggests a longer literary unit. He classifies this text as part of what he describes as Witness in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, expanding from 4:1-19-6:71. Within it there are smaller units that meet certain objectives (Keener 2003:246). Schneiders classifies the story in what she calls 'Cana to Cana' literary development in John, which extends from chapter 2-4. She points out that in this section, at the Cana sign, Jesus is first believed in by his disciples. It ends with other people believing in him; following the healing of the royal official's son in Cana, his household believed in Jesus (Schneiders 1991:187).

The immediately preceding passage (John 3:22-36) introduces the dialogue by explaining how Jesus found himself in Samaria. The reader is informed of the reasons which motivated Jesus' departure from Judea to his home town in Galilee (4:1-3). This trip takes him through Samaria making possible his meeting and conversation with the Samaritan woman. In the immediately following passage (4:43-54), Jesus has reached Galilee where he performs his second sign. The identification of the structure of this story helps to understand how it is arranged and told.

6.2.4 Inner structure of John 4:1-42

Scholars have several ways of structuring this passage. The simplest structure is such as suggested by Brown (1966:176-185) that divides the episode into two scenes – one of Jesus' dialogue with the woman (4:4-26) and the second of his dialogue with the disciples (4:27-38). Burge adopts the same structure but includes verses 1-3 in the first part and verses 39-42 in the second part which he calls "the food of Jesus" (Burge 2000:139, 148). Like Brown and Burge, Ngewa also focuses on the variation of the main characters and isolates two parts – one reporting Jesus' discourse (4:6b-4:24, 27, 31-38) and the other describing the woman's witness (4:25-26, 28-30, 39-42). The two parts are preceded by a section presenting the setting of the story (4:1-6a) (Negewa 2003:64).

O'Day suggests a more detailed structure by dividing the text into six parts: a transitional section (4:1-3); introduction: the setting of the narrative (John 4:4-6); the first dialogue:

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Jesus and the woman (4:6-26); the transition scene (4:27-30); the second dialogue (4:31-38); and the conclusion: Jesus and the Samaritans (O'Day 1986:54). Others, like Kruse, divide the passage into four parts: the setting (4:1-6); Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:7-30); Jesus' instructions to his disciples (4:31-38); and Jesus and the Samaritan townspeople (4:39-42) (Kruse 2003:125-141). A totally different approach is followed by Brodie who focuses on Jesus' utterances. Brodie notes that Jesus speaks nine times in the whole episode and he groups these utterances into three units of three utterances each. The first three, concerning different meanings of water, occur in the first part of Jesus' conversation with the woman (4:7-15). His next three, dealing largely with the woman's history and with the move to a more spiritual worship, occur in the later division of the conversation (4:16-24). The final three, dealing with Jesus, his mission and his initial commissioning of the disciples, go from the very end of the conversation with the woman to the end of the conversation with the disciples (4:26-38) (Brodie 1993: 215).

The present study focuses on the Samaritan woman and Jesus and the role they play in breaking the barriers that divided their people. From this perspective, this passage is structured in a way that it is possible to highlight the characterization of the Samaritan woman and Jesus as agents of restoration of unity among the members of their social groups. An outline guided by such concern is as follows:

A. Setting: The news about Jesus' popularity is heard by the Pharisees (John 4:1-4)

    B. Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman: her readiness for instructions on transcending traditional and social barriers (4:6-38)

        C. The learning process of the woman with Jesus bears fruits: she becomes an agent for mediation (4:28-30; 39-40)

    B`. Jesus' dialogue with his disciples: their attitude towards traditional barriers is addressed (verses 27, 31-38)

A`. Setting: The news about Jesus' transcendence of social barriers is heard by the Samaritans (verses 41-42)

The structure described above guides the movement of the plot as it is summarized below:

6.2.5 Plot of John 4:1-42

In his description of the setting of the story, the narrator prepares the reader for the meeting of the main characters. The Pharisees heard some news about Jesus and their reaction hastened Jesus' trip from Judea to Galilee. He passes through Samaria by a well in a city where he met a Samaritan woman (verses 3-7). At first encounter, a conflict arises from Jesus' request to the woman to give him a drink (verse 7). The woman was surprised by the traveller's overlooking the social barriers that separate their respective social groups and keep them estranged from each other (verse 9). Jesus, who is concerned with breaking barriers, undertakes to instruct the woman to transcend kinship and prejudices (verse 10) but the hope of seeing the barriers overcome fades away as the woman uses arguments from her socio-cultural background to maintain the status quo of separation (verses 11-12). Progressively, at Jesus' exposure, the woman gains more and more insight into him and starts showing interest in associating with him by asking for water as well (verse 15). Her request stirs Jesus' act of meeting her personal need and this boosts the woman's self-esteem which had been destroyed by continued male control of her. Now she sees in Jesus a prophet (verse 19), although she is still confused by her religious background (verse 20). But with additional instruction from Jesus, she also transcends the religious divisions. She is ready to see him as the expected Messiah.

As the conflict appears to be resolved, Jesus' disciples enter the scene (verse 27). The reader is informed about their attitude, which seems not to approve of Jesus' conversation with the woman. The disciples display a judgmental and biased attitude towards Jesus' association with the Samaritan woman. At this juncture the scene is divided. On one side, the reader can see how the woman has transcended kinship and historical barriers. The reader then follows her to the city where she is gathering people (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) whom she invites to come and see Jesus (verses 29-30). On the other side, the reader can follow Jesus' instructions to his disciples about their need to transcend race and gender barriers (verses 31-38). The Samaritan men (verse 42), like the disciples, still display an attitude

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of despising the woman. But the conflict is totally resolved as many Samaritans arrive, believe in Jesus and, transcending the barriers, invite Jesus to stay with them (verses 39-40). The narrator ends the story with information similar to the introduction: at the end the news about Jesus is heard by the Samaritans because of the testimony of the woman. This movement of the plot is observed in the detailed exposition that follows here below.

6.2.6 Exploration of the plot of John 4:1-42

6.2.6.1 A. Setting: The news about Jesus' popularity is heard by the Pharisees (4:1-4)

The narrator introduces the story with a description of its immediate setting. Some scholars begin their analysis with 4:1 while others start with verse 4 or 5. They generally consider the section of 4:1-3 to function as a conclusion to the preceding section particularly 3:22-36. Thus, they believe that these verses constitute a transitional section in the entire Gospel narrative, not an introduction to the current narrative (O'Day 986:51-52). Howard-Brook observes a close connection of these three verses to chapter 3:22. He asserts that the startling story of Jesus begins to take root in readers in verse 22 of chapter 3. He notes that after 3:22, Jesus is not heard from or seen until he leaves Judea for Galilee. He argues that the narrative shifts its attention immediately from Jesus until the following chapter (4:3) (Howard-Brook 1994:95).

The present work considers the first three verses (1-3) as part of the introduction to the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In Greek, the first three verses are one long sentence, introducing the reader to a second long interview by Jesus (Walvoord and Zuck 1983:284). The rationale for reading John 4:1-6 as a unit is that these verses provide the context for Jesus' journey. The first two verses (1-2) provide the reasons that prompted Jesus to leave Judea while the next four (verses 3-6) establish the itinerary for the journey. The author reports that the news about Jesus' popularity was known by the Pharisees. He was then compelled to leave (verses 1-2). Ngewa observes that the ministry of repentance of John the Baptist was a threat to the Pharisees' traditional reputation and authority. He believes that this was because the followers of John could not follow the Pharisees' teachings which were mere formalism compared to John the Baptist's. Ngewa

argues that Jesus' teachings were even more challenging to the Pharisees and that they considered him a greater threat than John. When Jesus learnt this about the Pharisees, fearing for his safety, he quickly left Judea and headed towards Galilee his home town (Ngewa 2003:64). He took the shortest route that passes through Samaria (verse 3).

The author emphasizes that Jesus had to pass through Samaria: ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. This verb " ἔδει", which is the imperfect form of δει expresses the idea of "being obliged", "being necessary", "must", "ought", "be proper". The imperfect tense then translates: "had to", "should have to" (Aland 1982:40). For some, there is no geographical necessity for going to Galilee through Samaria. Some believe that the obligation which is expressed by "ἔδει" is based on that route being a shortcut. In his view it was absolutely necessary for those who would go quickly to pass through that country of Samaria because by taking that route one may in three days, go from Galilee to Jerusalem. The alternative route passed through Perea and its distance was double the route passing through Samaria. Despite its distance, many Jews preferred it because it avoided Samaria altogether.[65] It is specifically pointed out that this route was avoided by self-righteous Jews who did not want to pollute themselves by mingling with Samaritans as they were considered defiled (Ngewa 2003:65; Kruse 2003:126).

The use of the verb ἔδει in this text is then interpreted differently. O'Day asserts that elsewhere in the Gospel, for instance in the passages of 3:14, 30; 9:4, the author almost always uses ἔδει with the sense of theological necessity. The necessity is due to God's plan as ἔδει indicates. The Father was sending him there to look for those who would worship him in spirit and truth (4:23) (Whitacre 1999:101; Brown 1984:169). God's plan and will was involved in Jesus' choice of route (Stibbe 1993:65). O'Day, however, believes that both divine and mundane necessities are involved (O'Day 1986:54). In other words, it was necessary (ἔδει δέ) for Jesus to go through Samaria (4:3-4) not only because of geographical necessity, as it was a shorter route, but also it was necessary because he had God's plan to carry out, the plan of destroying the walls of divisions.

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[65] See the section above on the conflicts between the Judeans and the Samaritans, explaining some of the reasons why the route through Samaria was avoided.

The narrator records that after a tiring journey Jesus reached the well near Sychar about the sixth hour (verse 6). The reference to the 'sixth hour' however is the object of debate among the exegetes of this text. Some, like Burge (2000:142) and Whitacre (1999:101), consider the 'sixth hour' in its literal meaning as the middle of the day, or noon. Those who understand this hour to refer to the literal time of noon believe that Jesus is portrayed in his human nature because he reached the well exhausted. From this perspective, the author presents Jesus as human by describing his state as κεκοπιακώς a participle from the verb κοπιάω (verse 6) which means work, toil, work hard, grow tired, with hard work (Zerwick 1996: 295). Brodie understands that at the well Jesus does not appear particularly heroic. He argues that Jesus seems to yield to pressure, to be giving in to the Pharisees. And by the time he reaches the well, his mood seemed even less heroic. He was tired, thirsty and hot because of the heat of the day (Brodie 1993:214).

Others however consider the 'sixth hour' in a symbolic way; they argue that it would be an unusual choice of time for this woman to go to the well. Brown contends that the act of fetching water was a task done in the morning and evening. For Brown the scene at the well links Jesus with the crucifixion. From this view the sixth hour is seen in the light of John 19:14, the hour of crucifixion, and Jesus' thirst refers to his thirst on the cross (Brown 1984:169). As for Brodie, he believes that the sixth hour may be interpreted either literally or as representing the crucifixion time. To him, the sixth hour refers to the calendar time of the day while from the perspective of the figurative, Jesus' exhaustion refers to his last breath at the cross (Brodie 1993:221).

This work adopts a literal approach of the "sixth hour" and surmises that the many activities reported in the story took place during the day. These include the fetching of water (verse 7), the buying of food (verse 8), the conversations (verses 7-26; 31-38), the report to the men of the city (verses 28-30) and the arrival of the Samaritans (verses 39-40). Hence, the meeting and the conversation between Jesus and the woman occurred at noon.

6.2.6.2 B. **Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman and her readiness for instructions broke the walls of social barriers (4:6-38)**

The first scene opens with the arrival of a woman at the well where Jesus has arrived some time before. She is apparently from one of the rural villages in Samaria and not from the city of Samaria because it was located several miles north of Sychar (Köstenberger 2004:148). But coming from the region of Samaria she was bearing the history, language, religion, and attitudes of people who considered themselves to be truly Israelite, but who were regarded by the Judeans as beyond the boundaries of Israel (cf. Burge 2000:141).

The act of drawing water daily was part of the normal activity for women in the culture of this part of the world. Given the culture that isolated women socially, the task of fetching water was an opportunity for them to meet and talk. "In the cool of the day, women gathered at the well to share stories, complaints and hopes, for the day or night" (Howard-Brook 1994:103). Wells were also viewed as places of courtship, places where men or their agents met their prospective wives, such as Rebekah the wife of Isaac (Genesis 24:10-49); Rachel the wife of Jacob (Genesis 29:4-14); Zipporah the wife of Moses (Exodus 2:15-22) (Keener 2003:597, Neyrey 2007:91, Brodie 1993:216-217). However, the purpose of Jesus at this well was not to take a bride; he had a different purpose.

At the well Jesus initiates the dialogue: Δός μοι πιεῖν. "Give me to drink" (verse 7). The imperative "Δός", from δίδωμι, indicates a request, though it is phrased as a command and sounds rude and abrupt. Moloney argues that Jesus' command arouses an arrogant response from the woman (Moloney 1998:115). I do not see arrogance in the attitude of this woman, but rather think the question evokes her suspicion. Who may this Jewish man be who dares ask for a drink from a Samaritan woman? Her question to Jesus is: "How is it that you, being a Judean, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (verse 9a). The question refers to the barriers known by the woman between the social groups they represent. Jesus' initiative could suggest his undertaking to deal with those barriers -

but it could also represent an insult or a sexual advance. No wonder the woman was suspicious.

Jesus' engaging in conversation with the Samaritan woman was unusual in many respects. By asking for a drink from a woman who had come to the well alone, and Jesus himself being alone (4:8), he broke all rules of conventional Judean piety as expressed by the Rabbis (Köstenberger 2004:148). It was not ethically and culturally right for a man to speak with a woman, especially alone in the street. According to Kenner, for a stranger to engage in private cross-gender conversation would be interpreted as a dangerous sexual ambiguous situation that could lead to sin. Moreover "if such a man and a woman are alone together for more than twenty minutes", it is assumed that "they have had intercourse" (Keener 2003:596-7). Similarly, Burge has observed that at that time, men rarely spoke to women in public, even if they were married to them. Single men never spoke to or touched women at any time (Burge 2000:143).

But following the conversation and its outcomes, Jesus' conversation had a positive motive. His goal was to instruct the Samaritan woman to transcend the barriers of human ties and traditions which she was already aware of and so preparing her for the act of reconciliation in her community. As said above, her reaction of shock over Jesus' way of overlooking the ethnic gulf that existed between Jews[66] is clarified by the narrator's statement οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίτις for Judeans had no dealing with the Samaritans" (verse 9b). The narrator uses the verb συγχράμαι, here meaning "associate on friendly terms with", to describe in general terms the number of socio-political and religious conflicts between Judeans and Samaritans (Ridderbos 1997:154). But the wrong information that the Samaritan woman had acquired from her community is challenged by the stranger.

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[66] The name 'Jews' in this paper is used as a broad term. It contains divisions that only the insiders are aware off. Referring to Jesus then as a Jewish man in this text situates him within the broad meaning of the term ἰΙoudai'o". He is identified as a Galilean.

6.2.6.2.1 The woman's kinship and gender bias are challenged (verses 7-15)

Jesus' use of a cryptic saying in his response to the woman's question: "If you knew the gift of God… you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (verse 10) seems to indicate that he ignores the woman's question. Instead, he transposes the discourse from a literal, physical plane, to a metaphorical, spiritual one (Köstenberger 2004:150). The phrase "gift of God" is interpreted differently by the readers of this text. For some it is the Holy Spirit as it is expressed in Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13; Isaiah 44:3. In Isaiah 12:3, it is the joy with which people "will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Kruse 2003:129). In Brown's opinion, "the gift of God" refers to Jesus' revelation or teaching, or to the Spirit communicated by Jesus, or to both (Brown 1966:179). Throughout the Fourth Gospel the water of superior quality is associated with Jesus' ministry (Köstenberger 2004:151).

But here it may be argued that Jesus' reference to the water he can give expresses a new truth that the woman will receive. If she is given that water she would no longer trouble herself about human problems that divide. Jesus thus shifts the conversation from the immediate causes of conflict back to a more important subject, which is to drink the water of life. The "gift of God" is the well from which Jesus draws and gives living water. It is called that to distinguish it from the well that Jacob had once "given" (verse 12) and from which the woman was accustomed to draw water (Ridderbos 19971:155). Her reply shows that she did not understand Jesus' language. She continues to refers to the water of Jacob's well (verse 11); her claim seems to emphasize her belonging to Israel because of her ancestor Jacob (Exodus 32:28) which stresses on the kinship difference. But from the perspective of reconciliation this woman's attitude is commendable. She is quite right to refuse to be told good things by Jesus as if the problem of historical injustice towards her social group could be simply swept under the carpet. Successful reconciliation requires openly addressing the issues that make barriers. It was necessary to raise these tricky issues of race and ownership of resources and social prejudice This may explain the reason for constantly turning back to the Samaritan's claim to Jacob as their ancestor. She does not accept the Judeans' claims to sole ownership of everything. Some positions have to be affirmed and others rejected so that

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Jesus and the Samaritan woman may have agreement. This is to be done only after establishing a situation which puts both Ioudaioi and Samaritans at the same level where none is superior. This confirms Jesus' statement, "Neither here nor in Jerusalem but in Spirit and truth" (John 4:21), which means that neither Judeans nor Samaritans are superior.

Before reaching consensus however, the woman's understanding is maintained at a literal level where 'living water' refers to highly coveted fresh spring water as opposed to stagnant water (Köstenberger 2004:150). Her rhetorical question "μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ" indicates expectation of a negative answer. It may be translated: "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you?" Here again the woman displays her attitude about the kinship and blood ties. It appears that there is another perspective from which she looks at those who are not related to her from the blood ties. It is the Patriarch Jacob, the one whom she considers to be her ancestor and not a Judean ancestor, who had provided the well and drank from it himself together with his sons and his livestock (verse 12).

Apparently, the woman thinks Jesus thought too highly of himself - that he was greater than Jacob and his family who drank from that water. Jesus pointed out that all those who drank from that well, including Jacob, were continually thirsty. In other words, they continued to maintain conflict and to look to others with the eyes of human ties and barriers. But Jesus clarifies to her that Πᾶς ὁ πίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου, διψήσει πάλιν· ὃς δ' ἂν πίῃ ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (verses 13, 14). He explains the reason for not being thirsty anymore; anyone drinking the living water becomes a fountain, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν (verse 14). S/he becomes a giver of the same kind of water to others, reminiscent as we have seen of Isaiah's vision of the people joyfully "drawing of water from the wells of salvation" in the last days (12:3; cf. 44:3; 49:10; 51:1) (Köstenberger 2004:152). The woman changes the tone; she expresses a desire to receive the water that Jesus talks about (verse 15). Perhaps this is a playful suggestion at first, but

one with a serious undertone which sweeps her on to a deeper level of conversation with Jesus.

Her readiness to drink water offered by the stranger is worth noting. She begins to transcend the prejudice of kinship and blood ties as she expresses the need for water from a Judean man. Proud as she was about the greatness of her ancestry (verse 12), and despite her sensitivity to the prejudicial attitude of the Judeans (verse 9), the Samaritan woman displays her ability to transcend the prejudice. Perhaps she realizes that Judeans are not irredeemably evil, or at least not all of them are bad. This is in contrast to the attitude of social discrimination experienced by some social groups even in today's context, where those of one group perceive others as irredeemably bad.

But at the well Jesus' willingness to share a drinking vessel with the Samaritan woman has encouraged her to revise her views of the Judeans. In turn, she expresses her readiness to share with Jesus. This readiness to share drinks for both Jesus and the woman is an important step in the act of reconciliation. The Samaritan woman, in her process of instruction to transcend the boundaries of kinship, is ready to drink the water offered by a man from a different social group. Malina has described the changes produced by this encounter from a rather different point of view (social scientific rather than narrative), but confirms the perspective we have been developing here. Malina notices that Jesus treats the Samaritan woman like a member of his family and now she begins to reciprocate. Malina argues that the woman is becoming part of the group of disciples forming a new family, a fictive kinship, around Jesus. She is no longer a woman with whom he should not speak (Malina 1998:99). Jesus' answer to the woman's request shifted the discussion from water to her own life. He continues the dialogue addressing another aspect of barriers, once again using the discussion around water.

6.2.6.2.2 The woman's dignity restored back by Jesus' transcendence of traditional barriers (verses 16-19)

Jesus' condition for giving her "living water" (ὕδωρ ζῶν v10) is to call her husband and then come back to the place (verse 16). Here comes the issues of six husbands/men,

πέντε γὰρ ἄνδρας ἔσχες καὶ νῦν ὃν ἔχεις οὐκ ἔστιν σου ἀνήρ·. Because of the five husbands, this anonymous woman is often seen allegorically as a representative of her people. For some scholars, the relationship between her and her five husbands and the current man is an expression of Samaria's past. While the five husbands are symbolic of Samaria's intermarriage with foreign peoples and the acceptance thereby of their false gods, her current man is seen as Rome, with whom she lives but has not married (Howard-Brook 1994:107). Schneiders argues that the woman is symbolic not only of the Samaritans who come to Jesus through the witness of the Johannine community, but of the New Israel who is given to Jesus, the Bridegroom from above (Schneiders 1991:189). But this paper takes a different approach; Jesus uses this situation to meet the personal needs of this woman before she can become a point of transformation in her community.

The interpretation of the issue of the six husbands and current man in a negative way, portraying this woman as prostitute or immoral woman, is patriarchal and biased. She is viewed in readings by male commentators - almost instinctively - as a prostitute who wants to seduce Jesus. Keener argues that by her reply she intends to mislead Jesus or that she is probably embarrassed to talk about her shameful past, or she sees Jesus as a potential sexual or marital partner (Keener 203:605). But there is no evidence for this bias and variations on it. The issue of ἄνδρας as men with whom she had an affair or husbands she divorced because of sexual immorality, is not well supported.

The assumption of being a prostitute or immoral woman whose affairs led to the breakdown of five marriages implies that that she was violating the law against adultery, which means that she would have been stoned (Leviticus 20:10). Moreover, if she was divorced five times and now she was living with a sixth man to whom she was not married, it could not have been of her own volition, because women in that culture did not have the right to divorce or to initiate relationships. A woman could not initiate or oppose divorce in Israelite culture, according to the Torah. Definitely, whatever happened to her was entirely in the hands of male volition. If she was divorced five times, it was again worse; it means she had a problem which was beyond her control that prompted all her husbands to divorce her - perhaps barrenness.

Whatever might have happened, it was controlled by a male authority. A woman in that culture was always under male control, first under the control of the father, then husband or eldest male relative or son (Treggiari 2002:132-6; Tucker 1992:57). If the husband had died, she was not free to make any decisions. She might be given to his brother in a levirate marriage. As she could not oppose or initiate divorce she could not oppose marriage either. If the patriarchal head of the family chose to sell her into slavery she could not refuse, nor could she if he should rent her out as a prostitute - even though she would take the shame and disgrace. There is no evidence that the "man with whom you are now living" was a sexual partner. It would more likely to be the patriarchal head of family, who might use her any way he chose. The fact that her community accepted her witness may reveal that she was a woman of virtue but perhaps who was under hardship because of her situation maybe as a servant or a barren woman. The narrator thus shows how Jesus looked into her personal needs and helped her to come out of the abuse of her community. He bestowed her dignity back to her in the society. But she still wants to know what this prophet says about the conflicting claims of her people and the Judean people over the "myths of origin" and ownership of their common culture.

6.2.6.2.3 The woman's benefits of the right instructions are exhibited (verses 20-26)

The woman's declaration in verse 19 is followed by a statement on a contentious issue of worship, referring to a central matter of disagreement between Jews and Samaritans related to a history of competing sanctuaries. Based on her existing information, she might have been certain that her people were on the correct side of the religious divide between Samaritans and Judeans, but now she has met a Galilean prophet. In the conflict over ownership of their common cultural heritage, the Galileans sided with the Judeans in legal observance. She cannot accommodate this anomaly in her belief system (Keener 2003:608). The woman's speech reveals that she is still distancing herself, even in the matter of religion. But according to Jesus, even religious divisions lose their value because true worshipers are to be sought neither in Jerusalem nor on Mount Gerizim (verses 21-24). He expresses his view that the true worship is not centred on any sacred place but on (Jesus) himself who is the new temple. Interestingly, having noted the woman's open attitude and readiness for instruction, Jesus pursues the exposure with

theological issues. Different from the metaphorical speech he had used earlier in the dialogue, this time Jesus speaks directly and makes a self-revelation: ἐγώ εἰμι, (verse 26). He provides the answer to the question "ὁ λέγων σοι" which he had put to the woman at the beginning of the dialogue (verse 10). Jesus is the "ὁ λαλῶν σοι". He is the λόγος. This is the climax to which the narrative has been building (Keener 2003:620).

The learning process to which the woman was exposed brought change to her understanding; she is a transformed character who aims to challenge her community. The reader who has followed the progress of the transformation of the woman is now informed about the attitude of the disciples about traditional barriers (verse 27). The narrator continues by relating the story, following two tracks. The reader is enabled to follow the woman to the village and the city, at the same time to follow the conversation between Jesus and his disciples at the well. Thus, the woman, having a new form of living water, leaves behind her water pot as the symbol of her former preoccupation (Brodie 1993:224). She abandoned her original purpose for coming to the well (to draw water) and hurries to witness about Jesus to the townspeople. The woman acted like the apostle-disciples in the synoptic gospels who left the nets, boats, parents or stall to follow Jesus (Schneiders1991:192). She stands in contrast to the Judean Nicodemus, who in 7:50-51 speaks out for fairness but does not positively witness to Jesus in front of his fellow Sanhedrin members (Köstenberger 2004:159).

The transformed woman, animated with the spirit of reconciliation, displays her transcendence of social and gender barriers which were the subject of conflict between the two social groups, by involving her community in meeting the members of the other group. She is concerned with her townspeople's attitude of holding onto their historical disputes and conflicts based on blood ties and religious differences. Her first preoccupation is to take to them the message of reconciliation by inviting them to come and associate with those from the "antagonistic group" (Jesus and his disciples) at the well. She reaches out to her townspeople with the words of an invitation: "Δεῦτε ἴδετε" (Come and see) which explicitly echoes the witness of Philip in 1:46 and may suggest that no less than Philip, the woman becomes a model for witness (Keener 2003:622). The

invitation to come and see Jesus is therefore an important step; it is the invitation to participate. The narrative thus places the woman on par with Jesus' other disciples who brought his message to the world (Keener 2003: 622).

The reader, who had followed the woman to the city and witnessed the fruits of her testimony, is now brought back to the well to follow a parallel account of Jesus' conversation with his disciples.

6.2.6.2.3 B`. Jesus' dialogue with his disciples: their negative attitude towards traditional barriers is addressed (verses 27, 31-38)

When the disciples come with the food, Jesus tells them that he does not need it (verse 31-34) because his dialogue with the woman, in their absence, has satisfied both his hunger to do the will of the one who sent him and the thirst that mediated their encounter (Schneiders 1991:192). Here again the disciples are contrasted with the woman. This team of men went to the city and all they could bring is earthly food. The woman went alone and through her testimony many Samaritans came to Jesus and believed. The woman contributes more to the harvest than the disciples do.

6.2.6.2.3.1 The disciples and the harvest (verses 31-38)

Jesus declines the invitation to eat the food brought by the disciples and claims that he has food which they do not know (verse 32). The disciples' ignorance about their master's food places them at the level of the woman at the beginning of the dialogue when Jesus pointed out a similar ignorance on her part in the statement "if you knew…" (verse 10). Like the disciples, the woman's own behaviour had first demonstrated this lack of knowledge through her reaction to Jesus' request for water (O' Day 1986:78). The disciples' reaction to Jesus' assertion confirms that as it was with the woman at the beginning of the conversation, their understanding is still at the lower literal level. The woman initially thought that Jesus could not have access to water unless he has something to draw with (verse 11); the disciples now think that Jesus cannot have food unless somebody brought some to him (verse 33). While the woman has now reached the level of contributing to making disciples, the disciples are still thinking about food.

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Frowning at Jesus' attention to the Samaritan woman, they suggest to him that the time is rather for eating. Jesus responds that doing his Father's work, as he was doing in talking to the woman, is the priority, not eating the food they brought to him (verse 34). Jesus then invites the disciples to focus their attention on the work which he calls the harvest and in which they should participate (verses 35-38).

Contrasting the "do you not say…" introducing the popular saying (verse 35a) with the "I say to you..." introducing Jesus' own wisdom (verse 35b), Jesus urges his disciples to focus on what now should be their priority. He asks them to lift up their eyes and look at the fields which are already white for harvest (verse 35). Jesus is surely not inviting the disciples to look at the barley harvest seen as white, or the wheat harvest, as it is sometime suggested (Keener 2003:625). He is speaking figuratively, probably referring to the approaching mass of Samaritans who, at the woman's invitation, had started to leave the city to come to Jesus (verse 30) (Köstenberger 2004:162; Ridderbos 1997:168). The disciples, who were already shocked at Jesus' inclusiveness that welcomed a woman, could feel the same with respect to discipling the Samaritans. Jesus' discourse on the harvest seems not to accommodate any form of exclusion.

The metaphor of the harvest is continued in the next metaphor of the sower and the reaper (verses 36, 37). Considering Jesus' description of himself as a worker sent by someone else (verse 34), the second metaphor may be understood to mean that the Father is the sower and Jesus is the reaper. More explicitly, however, Jesus states that he sent his disciples to reap that for which they have not laboured (verse 38). The disciples are, therefore, among the reapers. The identity of the sowers is less explicit. With respect to the Samaritan narrative, however, Jesus, and probably the Samaritan woman, can be perceived as the 'sowers'. The Samaritans who will soon confess Jesus as saviour (verse 42) are the fruit of this particular harvest (O' Day 1986:82) which is a direct result of the woman's dialogue with Jesus and her subsequent witness.

6.2.6.2.4 C. The learning process of the woman bears fruit: she becomes an agent for mediation (4:28-30, 39-40)

The former attitude of the woman's exclusion based on kinship, gender and religion was challenged by Jesus' teachings at the well. The learning process she went through changed all her former thinking and behaviour; at the end, the Samaritan woman had become Jesus' disciple as well (John 4:28-32, 39-41). Her contribution in bringing her people closer to Jesus is acknowledged in the statement that "many Samaritans of that city believed in him because of the word of the woman" (verse 39). However, the statement, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ" (verse 42) is sometimes interpreted in a way that undermines the testimony of this woman – rendering it "second hand" testimony (Köstenberger 2004:164). Reacting against this perception, Schneiders notes that in the Fourth Gospel we see, repeatedly, people brought to Jesus by a disciple and coming to full faith in him on the basis of Jesus' own word to them. Examples include John the Baptist's testimony which leads two of his disciples to follow Jesus (John 1:35-39), Andrew's testimony that brought his brother Simon (1:44-42), and Philip who brought Nathaniel (1:44-51). In each case, argues Schneiders, the pattern is the same: someone is brought to Jesus through the word of another but comes to believe in him definitely because of Jesus' own word (Schneiders 1991:193). The Samaritans do not denigrate the woman's testimony in 4:42, rather they confirm it (Keener 2003:626).

The role the woman played was not limited to the spiritual aspect of bringing her townspeople to faith; she bridged the gaps of prejudice and mutual mistrust between the Jews and the Samaritans.

6.2.6.2.5 A` Setting: News about Jesus is heard by many Samaritans: the woman's testimony bridges the gaps (41-42)

As seen above, before her transformation the Samaritan woman was so aware of all the divisive issues that she was quick to point them out at different stages of her conversation with Jesus, as if she wanted to maintain the *status quo*. However, after being challenged by Jesus' new truth, she understood that the act of peacemaking and reconciliation

requires the transcendence of unpleasant truths of the historical disputes which set their social groups against one another. The new learning experience provided her with the ability to overcome prejudices and hatred. Hence, after being liberated she did not waste her time but ran to the town to invite her townspeople to experience the same. As a result of her testimony, walls built on human ties were brought down. The Samaritans received Jesus with more than hospitality. Keener points out that the pattern of going to meet him (verse 40a), inviting him to the town (verse 40b), and calling him Saviour of the world (verse 42b) fits the way peoples embraced rulers, especially the emperor (Keener 2003:627). The Samaritans responded to Jesus' acts of transcendence of traditional and social divisions with reciprocal acts of reconciliation and offered hospitality to him and his disciples in a way which seemed to mark their acceptance of his status as the messiah/ prophet they awaited. Thus, the two parties agreed to break the wall of separations. They stayed together for three days, sharing everything without any report of discrimination.

The narrator started by announcing the negative reaction of the Pharisees which provoked Jesus' trip from Judea to Galilee. The story now ends with the Samaritans' positive reaction to Jesus' acts of inclusion, starting from the marginalized woman and expanding to the Samaritans through the testimony of that woman. Hence, because of the role of a transformed woman, the dialogue which had begun with an exclusive note in verse 9 ends with an inclusive fellowship in verse 40. The woman became a bridge-builder, and restored broken relationships as an archetype of what the new Christian community would be called on to do.

The readiness of the Samaritan woman to be exposed to the right teachings serves as an explicit demonstration that when women are allowed opportunity for instruction and are freed from being discriminated against and abused, they prove that their significance in their communities is as important as that of men.

6.2.7 Summary
The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:1-42 is interpreted in different ways. Traditional exegesis and male-biased interpretation of the text tended to

describe the Samaritan woman of this story as a woman of disrepute who attempted to distract Jesus from what they see as reprehensible aspects of her life. However, Jesus did not see the Samaritan woman from that perspective. He seems to approach her from sorrow and sympathy as an abused woman who has been under a succession of six different males' oppressive authority. This is a different perspective than seeing her as an immoral woman who tried to seduce Jesus and whose life changed after their encounter.

A feminist reading of the same story rejects the perception that makes this woman a whore converted by Jesus. She is rather perceived by Schneiders as a symbolic figure representing the Samaritan community. Her theological dialogue with Jesus mediates the significant religious differences between the Jews and the Samaritans. Jesus talks to the woman using the adultery/idolatry metaphor of the prophetic tradition to call Samaria to renounce its historical infidelity and to embrace the worship of the one God in spirit and truth (Schneiders 1991:193).

The present work, however, has looked into the story "with different eyes". It has approached the narrative from the perspective of reconciliation and bridge building. The approach to the narrative does not discard nor contradict the other interpretive approaches to the text, but builds on them with special a focus on aspects of peacemaking, bridge-building and reconciliation found in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. From the beginning of the narrative, Jesus exhibits his inclusive attitude in deciding to go to Samaria, "the land of the despised "other", to confront and to heal the ancient divisions and exclusions based on morality, gender and ethnicity and to integrate into the New Covenant not those who were merely ignorant of, but those who had been unfaithful to, the Old Covenant" (Schneiders 1991:193).

The first recipient of Jesus' invitation to inclusion is a woman, representative of the despised and excluded "other". The woman is introduced in the narrative as a person bearing the history, language, religion, and attitudes of people on the far margin of Judaism (Burge 200:141). Her perception of the society around her is informed by the traditions in which she was raised, and of which she was a prisoner. Toward the end of

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the narrative, however, she has transcended the bonds of kinship and blood ties and has become an active participant in building a new community that overcomes social boundaries. The role of the Samaritan woman corresponds with the role of Jesus' mother at the Cana wedding where, after being instructed by Jesus, she transcended the relationship based on kinship and blood ties and became an agent in building a new community.

At the well after as a process of instruction in the truth that challenged the traditions of exclusion and prejudice based on kinship and human ties, the Samaritan woman became a tool for bridge-building and reconciliation. In their encounter, the Samaritan woman is characterized as a teachable person. She asks questions, raises objections but chooses the truth once it is clearly made known to her, paying no attention to the opinion of the disciples who appear still to be bound by a tradition of prejudice and exclusion. More importantly, she is motivated by the spirit of peacemaking which is exhibited by her act of involving her community in the same act of reconciliation. She became a mediator between Samaritans and Jews. At the end of the story, the relationship which was broken is declared restored. The Samaritans associate with Judeans represented by Jesus and his disciples. The narrator says that the Samaritans urged Jesus and his disciples with them, and they accepted to stay two days (verse 40). The two groups who did not have anything in common can stay together and share everything. The Samaritans became also Jesus' disciples because of the woman's testimony (verse39). The Samaritan woman contributes to the breaking of social barriers and building a new community where traditional and historic exclusions lose their power.

 Rwandan women have much to learn from the Samaritan woman as characterized in this narrative as well as the mother of Jesus in the previous text. Martha and Mary, the Bethany siblings, played a similar role in a different context. The next text, John 11:1-12:11, examines the way these sisters at Bethany transcended kinship and regional differences in their relationship with Jesus, and how Mary publicly broke traditional boundaries in her act of reconciliation using perfume and her hair during a dinner at Bethany (John 12:3).

6.3 Mary and Martha (John 11:1-12:1-11)

6.3.0 Introduction

This section focuses on the characterization of Mary and Martha in the narrative recorded in John 11:1-12:1-11. The event of this text revolves around a family in Bethany, made up of three members, Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. These siblings are renowned for their particular friendship with Jesus in an environment which was hostile to him. They lived in Bethany, a village located in Judea, a place where Jesus' life was constantly under threat as a Galilean outsider,[67] and where he was eventually arrested and killed. The analysis of the two previous texts pointed to Jesus' mother's and the Samaritan woman's acts of reconciliation, which were possible because of their transcendence of kinship and blood ties. The analysis of the current text aims at examining the attitude of the other two women, Mary and Martha, as they maintained their unswerving loyalty to Jesus even when he was targeted by their neighbours. The attitude of these sisters is another case that provides a space for interaction with the attitude of Rwandan women in situations of conflict. This analysis wishes to see how these Judean sisters from Bethany transcended the kinship, clannish and regional differences to build a solid relationship with the Galilean Jesus. The analysis will expand in examining the climax of this text, displayed through the public act of reconciliation performed by Mary at a dinner in the honour of Lazarus in John 12:3.

The present study approaches the text from the perspective of peacemaking and unity building. As required by the narrative criticism approach followed by this study, attention is paid to the literary aspect of the text. After a brief discussion of the geographical and literary setting of the text, its location in the whole Gospel and its inner structure, a detailed exposition will pay attention to the plot, the characters and the study of key words. The analysis culminates with insights gained from the text which are related to peacemaking and unity building. The analysis starts with the setting of the event which will assist us to understand it in its context

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[67] The details about the relationship between Jesus and the Judeans will be provided as the analysis unfolds.

6.3.1 Setting of the event of John 11:1-12:1-11

Aspects of the setting examined here include the geographical location where the event is reported to have happened as well as the literary context, thereby fitting the story within the events of the larger narrative.

6.3.1.1 Geographical and time setting of the event

The event of raising Lazarus is reported to have taken place in his hometown at Bethany. The biblical account refers to two places called Bethany. One is located beyond the Jordan, a place where John the Baptist was baptizing, sometimes also referred to as Bethabara (John 1:28). Also referred to in John 10:40, this Bethany is located either in Perea at the Jordan, a few miles north of the Dead Sea where the journey takes about a day from Jerusalem, or up north in Batanea. The other Bethany, the one mentioned in this text, is identified as the town of Mary and her sister Martha and it was located about two miles away from Jerusalem (John 11:18). This Bethany[68] was more like a suburb of Jerusalem situated about three kilometres from Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Ngewa 2003:206; Schnackenburg 1980:321). It is identified today with a town situated between Jericho and Jerusalem named El-'Azariyeh, a name derived from "Lazarus" (Brown 1966:422) in commemoration of Lazarus (Köstenberger 2004:327) .

The Bethany near Jerusalem is well attested, however, as the place where Jesus resided when visiting Jerusalem (Mark 11:11, 14:3; Matt 21:17, 26:6.). When Jesus was in Jerusalem he used Bethany as his base, as he used Capernaum when he was in Galilee. (Burge 2000:312). Bethany, as the locale of John's story, is therefore plausible enough without looking for a symbolic meaning (Brown 1966:422), though John's intensive use of symbolism suggests that symbolic interpretations of the name should remain a possibility unless rendered improbable by other factors in the interpretation.

The geographical location of this event - in the vicinity of the capital city of Jerusalem - suggests the spread of the news about Jesus' act at Bethany, and Martha and Mary's act

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[68] A figurative play on the etymology suggests an interpretation of the name Bethany as reflecting *Bēt-'anya',* "House of affliction" (Brown 1966:422), which may fit the meaning of Lazarus' name: (God helps) if we consider the affliction the family undergoes.

of associating with Galileans (Jesus and his disciples) in the city which was the home of the Judean elite. Perhaps the geographical location of Jerusalem in Judea was the cause of the region's claim to the superiority of its people over those of other regions like Samaria or Galilee, as seen in the two previous narratives. This location also may help us understand the issue of regionalism in this text, which is one of the major causes of conflict between Jesus and the Judeans.[69] Following Malbon's literary narrative criticism, the next question in the analysis is "when?", which deals with the time.

6.3.1.2 Time setting for Lazarus story

The precise time of the event is not clearly indicated, although Osborne and Malina estimate that the Lazarus' event may have occurred sometime during the four months, roughly, between the Feast of Dedication and Passover. Malina clarifies, however, that speaking about time in the Fourth Gospel is more complicated than calendar reckoning (Osborne 1999:27; Malina 20007:192). The approximation of the time is significant for this work because of its connection with Mary's proleptic public act of reconciliation expressed by the anointing of Jesus at the dinner.[70] The fact here is that the narrator of the story does not provide details about the specific time of the event; but the information that it was shortly before the Passover is sufficient to relate it with Mary's act before Jesus' death.

6.3.2 The location of John 11:12:1-11 in the Fourth Gospel

As noted above, scholars have divided this Gospel into two major units. The previous texts are located in the unit called the Book of Signs (verses 1-12). It deals with Jesus' public ministry which was preparing his audience for his work on the cross, that is, his death and resurrection. The second unit consists of the remaining part of the Gospel (verses 13-21) and focuses on Jesus' passion. It tells of his last words to his disciples and then his death and resurrection. The raising of Lazarus is reported in John 11:1-57 and is therefore part of the Book of Signs which serves as the manifestation of Jesus to the

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[69] The detail about the regionalism issue connected to Judea is elaborated in the section belon on the relationship between Jesus and the Judeans.

[70] This public act of reconciliation will be elaborated later as the analysis unfolds when dealing with characters of the narrative

nation (Walvoord and Zuck 1983:270). The raising of Lazarus is the last in the series of Jesus' signs that began in chapter 2 and revealed God's glory. Kruse argues that the event in John 11:1-57 is the last and greatest of the miracles/signs of Jesus that the evangelist records (Kruse 2003:246).

The raising of Lazarus in John 11:1-57 is a fitting climax to the Book of Signs. But the reading of this story from the perspective of peacemaking and reconciliation sees the act of anointing Jesus by Mary as the climax of the story rather than an "appendix" to the raising of Lazarus. From this view, the Lazarus account is not only the "climax" to the Book of Signs but it is also the bridge to the second half identified as the Book of Glory. Examining this account from the perspective of the bridge, it holds a key position in the narrative, and Mary plays the decisive role at the crucial moment when Jesus is officially condemned and pursued due to the order of the Sanhedrin (John 11:47, 57). She demonstrates her support for the rejected outsider Jesus, claiming and encouraging the same support and peacemaking act from her kinship and community. Analysis of this passage requires attention to its inner structure.

6.3.3 Structure of John 11:1-12:1-11

Scholars have suggested different units in this narrative but most of them identify four different moments in it. In the first part of the narrative, Jesus discusses with his disciples the need to go back to Judea because a family friend has a problem (verses 1-16). In the second part, Jesus arrives in Bethany and comforts the Bethany sisters (verses 17-37). The third unit reports Jesus performing the miracle of raising Lazarus (verses 38-44). The last part reports the reaction to the miracle (verses 45-54). The present study follows the same structure but focuses on the aspect of the narrative that speaks about love in a hostile environment. The moments of the narratives are described as follows:

A. Crisis in the beloved family (verses 1-16)

    B. A public act of sacrificial love defies strife (verses 17-37)

        C. Love overcomes Lazarus' death (verses 38-44)

           D. Mixed reaction to act of love (verses 45-48)

        C`. Love provokes condemnation (11:49-57)

    B`. A public act of "shameful" love stirs animosity (12:1-8)

A`. Crisis in the ruling elite (12:9-11)

The major units structured in the above ring composition present the description of successive scenes in which the characters interact. It is around this interaction of the characters that the plot develops.

6.3.4 The plot of John 11:1-12:11

The plot starts with a crisis in the family of the beloved, "A man named Lazarus is sick" (verse 1). The announcement of the crisis is followed by a peculiar feature marked by the proleptic announcement of anointing at the beginning of the narrative which will come to pass later after the raising of Lazarus. Mary's future act will provide a key point in the interpretation of the text from the viewpoint of the role of women in peacemaking. It is worth noticing that Mary only anoints Jesus after the raising of Lazarus, when the order to arrest him had been issued. From the outset of the story the narrator informs the reader about the transcendence of barriers by Jesus and the family of Bethany, depicted by their good relationship. He refers to Mary's act (verses 2-5) and reiterates Jesus' care to this family friend of Bethany (verse 5) in Judea.

A complication arises in the plot as Jesus' disciples remind him that it is not safe for him to go back to Judea (verses 7-13). However, the tension of the reader, which was created by the disciples' fear and reticence to go back to Judea, is cut short by Jesus' determination to publicly demonstrate his sacrificial love to the beloved (verse 15). In the next scene, Jesus has reached Bethany. But now the situation is more complicated: Lazarus has died and "had been already in tomb for four days!" (verse 17). The

information that Bethany is near Jerusalem, allowing many Judeans to be present at the venue (verses 18-19), seems to remind the reader that the environment is not safe for Jesus. The atmosphere of mourning, however, seems to eclipse Jesus' insecurity at the grave. The reader is exposed to the grief of the bereaved sisters and Jesus' comforting them, expressed in cryptic theological pronouncements so that neither the sisters nor the reader clearly understand what kind of help he can provide (verses 20-33). Jesus' display of emotion (35, 38), however, shows that he is deeply concerned about the situation; he walks towards Lazarus' grave.

The third scene describes what happens at the grave. The suspense grows greater as Jesus insists in his request that the grave stone be removed (verses 39-40).[71] Now the crisis in the beloved family is totally resolved (verse 44). But the reader is exposed to the mixed reaction of mourners toward Jesus' act of love of restoring Lazarus back to life (verses 45-46). His public act of sacrificial love provokes his condemnation by the ruling elite (verse 50). The fourth scene reports the deadly retaliation (verses 49-57) that resulted from the meeting of the Sanhedrin. The situation becomes more unclear for the reader who cannot wait to hear what is going to happen to Jesus because the plot to kill him is officially issued by the Sanhedrin (verse 53). Will he stay in hiding and not attend the great Feast? The plot again creates suspense for the reader.

The scene at the B` section is the climax of the story. It describes Jesus' public act of love which stirs animosity as well as provoking a crisis for the ruling elite. The resurrected Lazarus is now the host of a public meal where his sister Mary makes an open act of associating unambiguously and "shamefully" with the Galilean Jesus, even if he has been officially condemned and pursued by the Judean authorities (12:1-3). The scene ends with a crisis: there is a large crowd of Judeans at Mary's home together with the ruling elite who plot even to kill not only Jesus but also Lazarus (verses 9-11). There is a crisis in a way also for the community of those who love Jesus: Judas' negative response

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[71] The rolling away of the stone and the presence of Mary at the open tomb is also "proleptic", like the mention of her act of anointing of Jesus at the beginning of the story in chapter 12. The same rolling away of the stone happens at the Resurrection of Jesus. But there it is Mary Magdalene who requests for the stone to be rolled away while here at Lazarus' tomb Jesus asks for it.

indicates that the division no longer runs along the fault lines of region and clan but rather cuts across them to create new allegiances. This crisis at the end of the plot demonstrates the failure of the ruling elite (and one person from the Galilean group of disciples) to learn from Mary's act of transcendence of regional and social differences. More details are discussed in the exposition of the narrative below.

6.3.5 Exposition of John 11:1-12:11

The analysis focuses on the characterization of key people in the narrative, the key words and literary devices that the narrator uses to describe the scenes. The story begins with the announcement of a crisis.

6.3.5.1 A. A crisis in the family of the beloved (11:1-16)

The announcement of the crisis is followed by a discussion between Jesus and his disciples about the need and the risk of going back to Judea. Having resisted the disciples' advice against taking the trip, Jesus arrives at Bethany where he is received by the two sisters mourning their brother who is already dead and buried. The main characters of this story are introduced immediately after the announcement of the crisis in the prologue of the narrative.

6.3.5.1.1 Prologue (verses 1-6)

The announcement of a crisis "a certain man is sick" (verse 1) sets the narrative in motion. The identification of Lazarus leads to the introduction of the main characters of the narrative. The description of the characters' relation to each other makes up the prologue (verses 1-6). The name Lazarus is a shortened form of Eleazar, meaning "God helps" and some have taken this character to be a symbolic figure representing a suffering believer (Koester 2003:66). By looking into the meaning of the name 'Lazarus', it is appears that the symbolism here may be connected to his home town 'Bethany', which means "a house of suffering". Perhaps Lazarus was named after that town because of the family's situation connected to such a 'house of suffering'.[72] His name may also indicate

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[72] This connection fits Rwandan culture whereby children are usually named according to the circumstances surrounding the time of their birth. For instance, those who are born during the war

that his parents were God-fearing people who believed that God is their helper in suffering.[73]

The reference here to the story of the anointing, reported later in next scene of the plot,[74] has been perceived by some as an indication that the readers of this Gospel were familiar with it (Köstenberger 2004:326). Others consider this verse (verse 2) to be a parenthesis added by an editor (Brown 1966:423). In Esler's estimate however, the connection between Lazarus' account and the anointing story is a deliberate creation of the evangelist who intended to stress the mutual love between Jesus and the Bethany siblings (Esler 2006:58). It appears that the anointing story is used to introduce Mary, stressing her relationship with Jesus on the basis of which he is expected to be involved in the crisis. From the view of this work, this act is rather a climax of the story as mentioned above and as it will be detailed in the next sections. It was discussed above that the mention of Mary's anointing of Jesus with perfume at the beginning of the story is proleptic. It points forward to something which has not happened but which is the key to understand the current narrative. Jesus commended it by declaring it as a crucial act which was preparing him for the cross. This important act then identifies the story as a bridge between the two major sections of the Gospel.

The prologue continues with the message of the sisters to Jesus, ἴδε ὃν φιλεῖς ἀσθενεῖ which may point to a mutual love between Jesus and the Bethany family. The sentence, 'the one you love' is sick, leads to an interpretation that Lazarus is the anonymous disciple repeatedly referred to in the Fourth Gospel as the Beloved Disciple; but there are

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(*intambara*) are named after that incident, such as, *Ntambara:* 'That of the war' for a male child or *Nyirantambara* for a female. Those born around the arrival of the first airplane (*indege*) were named after it, "*Hajindege*': 'An airplane has come' etc. Thus, Lazarus might also have been named after what was happening in his village.

[73] Although there is no indication of the nature of the suffering which prompted that name, that gap may be filled by looking into some other situations. Perhaps the early death of the parents left the three as orphans. It is possible that as Lazarus was not as well known as his sisters he might have been the youngest in the family. In that case perhaps his mother died after giving birth to him and the father gave him that name. Or he was named by his sisters who took care of him after the death of both his parents who might have left him as a very small baby. Even though this may be too speculative, it better explains why such a name would be given with its meaning in that society

[74] This scene is in a section known to us as chapter 12. But we should be aware that the chapters are a much later addition to the text, which means that the first part of chapter 12 may belong to chapter 11.

strong objections to this assumption (Brown 1966:xcv; Ridderbos 1997:387; Esler 2006:76-86).[75]

This sentence ἴδε ὃν φιλεῖς ἀσθενει in the prologue conveys the message of the sisters to Jesus. The words of the message, "he whom you love is sick", though not presented as an explicit request, are perceived as an urgent appeal from the sisters to Jesus' power and love toward their sick brother (Ridderbos 1997:387). The subtlety of the sisters' request is reminiscent of Jesus' mother's earlier words to Jesus at the Cana wedding (2:3). Both cases reflect the practice, common in many ancient and modern cultures, of rather indirect and polite communication (Köstenberger 2004:327).[76] Moreover, this request may be characterized as an appeal for help based on an existing relationship, as seen above with Jesus' mother at the Cana wedding who based her request on human ties (2:1-11; 7:2-14). In other words, it could be the equivalent of an appeal to family and blood ties, to a patronage obligation. However, we have seen in that text, Jesus did not approve of this kind of request motivated by human ties; he rejected it at Cana. It seems that even in this account Jesus rejects it.

But Jesus' delay is interpreted in different ways. In Ridderbos' opinion, Jesus' delay is connected to the manifestation of God's glory after Lazarus' resurrection (Ridderbos 1997:387). Kenner believes that the delay to attend to Lazarus' sickness and later on his raising also leads to and prefigures Jesus' death and resurrection (Keener 2003:839). Ridderbos agrees saying, "When the Fourth Gospel mentions the manifestation of Jesus' glory (as with the first miracle, 2:11), it implies an anticipation of Jesus' resurrection and thus attempts to make the glorified Christ in heaven visible in the earthly Jesus (Ridderbos 1997:388). But Talbert suggests that Jesus' stay for two more days is motivated by God's leading (5:19) which dismisses human pressures, especially from

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[75] My view about this reference is reflected in the discussion of the authorship of the gospel in the chapter on the context of the Fourth Gospel

[76] The approach of these Jewish women evokes the practices of some African cultures such as the Bembe tribe in Congo and elsewhere where women are not allowed to invade the territory of males by making direct requests. Women may express their wishes or inform the husbands about the items missing in the home for instance but they must avoid any form of a command or a direct request.

those closer to him like his mother at Cana wedding (2:3-4) or his brothers (7:8-9) or his beloved at Bethany (11:5) (Talbert 1992:172). Talbert's opinion then concurs with the view of encouraging the transcendence of human ties. However, as he did with the request of his mother, it was a delay, not a complete refusal. After two days' delay, Jesus decides to go to Bethany; this time the opposition came from his disciples who fear for Jesus' security and theirs.

6.3.5.1.2 The risky trip back to Judea (verses 7-16)

Two days after he received the news of Lazarus' critical situation, Jesus decides to go and see him (verse 7). It is at this time that the disciples enter the scene. They had apparently acquiesced to Jesus' staying away from Judea even after the news that he was needed at Bethany. Now Jesus' idea of returning to Judea was frightening to them. They clarify that Judea was not a safe place for him because of the experience of conflict he had there, which means that there was a problem in the relationship between Jesus and the Judeans.

6.3.5.1.2.1 Judeans' hostility toward Jesus

The Johannine narrative portrays a context where Judea had become increasingly hostile to Jesus. This hostility and a bitter debate between Jesus and some Judeans are reported in this Gospel, mainly from chapters 5 to 12. These chapters report a series of signs performed by Jesus such as the healing of the paralytic, the multiplication of bread, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead. But while the disciples' faith is strengthened and more people believe in Jesus as a result of the signs, Judeans, especially the elite, misunderstand him and try to kill him. Newheart believes that all these signs happen during festivals in or near Jerusalem, except the multiplication of bread in Galilee (Newheart 2001:43).

The first overt hostility against Jesus is reported in John 5:16 although it is also implied in John 4:1-3. The Judeans' indignation toward the healed man (5:10) is transferred to Jesus who is then accused of breaking the Sabbath. The controversy escalates as Jesus appeals to his equality with God to justify his authority over the Sabbath, which amounted to blasphemy. They seek all the more to kill him (5:18). When Jesus exposes

the Pharisees' inconsistencies in claiming that they have God for their father but reject God's message (8:37-47), they charge that he is a Samaritan and has a demon (8:48). Chapter 8 is considered to be a classic summary of the true grounds of the clash between Jesus and the Judeans. Jesus' confrontation with the Judeans reaches a stage it had not yet reached in the Gospel (Ridderbos 1997:324). The chapter ends with a report of the Judeans taking up stones to throw at Jesus (8:59). The Judeans' attack on Jesus reappears at the Feast of Dedication when Jesus claims his unity with the Father (10:25-38). This time Jesus is openly indicted for blasphemy and the crowd threatens to stone him (10:31).

But if we investigate the hostility of Judeans toward Jesus we see that the Judeans' enmity goes beyond what they see as Jesus' blasphemy. Their antagonism may rather be connected to regional and ethnic issues. Judea and Galilee were two different places with different and conflicting histories. The issue was not only the different places; there are other arguments which may contribute to an additional explanation. Under the Seleucid/Ptolemaic divide, they were in different empires, and in Jesus' day, they were under two different jurisdictions. These two regions had been two separate kingdoms, Judah and Israel, before that. They had only been ruled by one government for about 100 years under the later Maccabean rulers, even though they shared the belief in YHWH and the Torah.[77] Judaea was under direct Roman rule through Pontius Pilate, after the dismissal of Archilaus, while Galilee was under Herod Antipas as a Roman client king.

Yamaguchi confirms the division among these two groups despite their same biblical Jewish ancestors.[78] Yamaguch then notices the inclusive use of the term 'Judeans' which

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[77] This regionalism issue between Judeans and Galileans is similar to that of Rwanda in the Great Lakes region. The problem of regionalism within Rwanda will be discussed in the next chapter.

[78] Previously, the regionalism in John was seen as ambiguous, especially in relation to Jesus as a Jew or a Galilean. More light has been shed on the relationship with Jews and Jesus. Yamaguchi asserts that the frequent use of the word Judeans in the Fourth Gospel was later on the basis for anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism; moreover, in the first-century Greco-Roman world, that word was used in an ambiguous way. Yamaguchi provides a brief overview of the history of Jewish people by tracing back to their tribal ancestors and the meaning of the term Judeans/Jews. He argues that Jewish people seem to have been called Hebrews, a name which probably derived from '*apiru/habiru* (outlaw)', social outcasts of Canaanite city states. When they established the tribal confederacy of Israel after the experience of the Exodus in the twelfth century B.C.E they identified themselves as Israel/Israelites. Then Israel underwent some transformation starting from the division of the kingdom into the northern state of Israel and the southern state of Judah. Later on both states were destroyed and all the Jewish people lost their identity, whether

was used by outsiders referring to the whole population of the entire land of Judea. But she points to the differences in the population identified by the term Judeans in the broad land of Judea. According to their geographical location, there were those in the region of Judea, the southern part of Palestine, Galileans from the northern part of Palestine, Samaritans from Samaria which was in the middle of Palestine and Pereans from Peria, which was east of the Jordan. The term *Judean* therefore referred to anyone who was either Judean by geographic origin, which means those born and raised in that region, by ethnicity, that is, Israelites by birth, or by religion (Yamaguchi 2002:5-6). Mtata notices that "some regions like Judea had feelings of superiority over other regions (like Samaria)" (Mtata 2009:152). Nathanael confirms it by his remark which denotes discrimination and contempt against Nazareth (John 2:46).

This short overview sheds some light on the use of the term 'Judeans' in this Gospel. From this perspective it may be easy to see the hostility of Judeans toward Jesus, especially in connection to their regional and ethnic origin. This perspective can be well understood from the Rwandan worldview. It has a similar view of outsiders in terms of the relationships amongst its own the population. As was seen in the chapter four, and elaborated in the next chapter, it may seem to outsiders that the inhabitants of Rwanda form one united nation. As they share the same language and are living in the same country, it may be difficult to explain their regional and ethnic conflicts. But sharing the same language and geographic location on the same continent does not dismiss their antagonism, based on what some scholars attribute to "identity" or "ethnicity" - both of which are social constructions (Millar 1993:5).

Perhaps the antagonism which existed between Jesus and the Judeans was not clear to the strangers. It was known well enough to the insiders, so that the disciples could insist that Judea was not a safe place for them and Jesus their master. Köstenberger affirms the disciples' remark by asserting that, "Returning to Judea was fraught with considerable

those in diaspora or those in Palestine (the Jewish soil). But at the end of the sixth century B.C.E they were able to rebuild the Second Temple and maintained their religious and ethnic identity as Israelites. But outsiders considered the whole population generally as Judeans (Jews) and called their entire land Judea. Thus the Israelites were those located geographically in the broad area of Judea, Samaria, Galilee and the Diaspora (Yamaguchi 2002:5-6).

risk to Jesus' own life, if not that of his followers" (Köstenberger 2004:329). The Judean elite however, do not clearly speak about regional or ethnic identity conflicts when opposing Jesus during the gatherings of his hearers. They rather prefer to cover it up with the religious issue, which was easily understood by the Roman political authorities and the population. For instance they use Jesus' claim of having come from the Father to stone him, seeing it as blasphemy because for the Judean religious authority, Jesus, a mere man, claimed to be God (Kostenberger 2004:314; Newheart 2001:43). Having in mind that atmosphere of tension between Jesus and the Judeans, it seems almost impossible to think of any person who could differ and display a friendly attitude to Jesus. However, the narrator indicates that in that place of conspiracy and hostility, a family of three siblings made a difference in their community.

At the Feast of Dedication, having realized that his life was in serious danger in Judea, Jesus was obliged to flee from that place and look for a secure place beyond the Jordan (10:39-40). But that hiding place was also known by his three friends. When a desperate situation of illness affected them, they sent a message to Jesus in his hiding place.

6.3.5.1.2.2 Jesus' discussion with the disciples about the trip to Bethany (verses 7-16)
When Jesus received the message of the sisters, he shared it with his disciples. The reaction of the disciples to the idea of going back to Judea (11:8,16) indicates that not only was Jesus' return to Judea enormously risky, but that his followers and close friends would feel unsafe in that place. They confronted him, "But Rabbi, a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you and you are going back there?" (verse 8). The disciples point to the incident of his brush with death, rendering Judea a dangerous place for Jesus. Thus, "Judea to which Jesus returns is considered a place of unbelief, trials, and death" (Neyrey 2004:192). Jesus' contact with the religious leadership in Judea had generated growing tensions and a serious threat to his and his disciples' security. During the previous Feast of Tabernacles the authorities were looking for him (7:11), and rumour was out that they wanted to kill him (7:25). He escaped when he was about to be stoned (8:59) but later found himself in a similar critical situation (10:31). Now they had just tried to arrest him at the Hanukkah (10:39) and that was the reason he was away from Judea.

The disciples were aware that they were not safe in Judea (verse8). Jesus' response to the disciples' reluctance to return to that place Judea was in the form of a parable (verses 9-10). He used the imagery of twelve hours in the day and the safety of walking during these hours because the light is guaranteed. Scholars have different views about the imagery of light used by Jesus. Keener, for instance, believes that this daylight is the Johannine way of speaking of natural wisdom, which is displayed in 9:4, 12:35 and 1 John 2:10 (Keneer 2003:840). But it is possible that using this figure of speech, Jesus intended to tell his disciples that as long as he is still with them, they have the light, meaning that they would not stumble; they should not worry. Jesus' statement to his disciples reflects his declaration about his identification by the use of Ἐγώ εἰμι.[79] His claims in this statement to his disciples may be better understood if it is seen in the mirror of the prologue and in its reference to the Creation story.

In the prologue of the Gospel the narrator refers to Jesus as the Word Λόγος who was with θεός ἐν ἀρχῇ (John 1:2). The author also emphasizes that everything was made through this Word/ Λόγος. He says: Πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν ὃ γέγονεν (John 1:3). In the prologue, the author also refers to Jesus' claim to be light by saying that ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· (John 1:4). The same φῶς comes again in John 11:9. Jesus refers to the light saying that the one who walks in daytime does not stumble ὅτι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου τούτου βλέπει. It means that in the prologue Jesus is seen as the Λόγος which made the light and who is himself the light/ τὸ φῶς. Seen in terms of the declaration in the Creation story, it is possible that the narrator of Lazarus' story confirms that Jesus is himself τὸ φῶς. In the Creation story, Jesus is the Word spoken in the darkness, *yehiy 'or*!, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3) and the world comes into being- a world in which the Word continues to work (John 9:4), as the Father continues to work, so that the darkness has never put it out. Now in

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[79] The Fourth Gospel provides Jesus' self-identification in the seven Ἐγώ εἰμι sayings which are peculiar to this Gospel. In this statement, Jesus seems to disclose his identification that he is the light of the world. Those walking with him transcend the darkness of the world which is portrayed by the divisions of different kinds, including those present among Judean religious authorities - divisions based on region, ethnicity, gender, religion and other traditions.

Lazarus' story, the proleptic act of Mary (John 11:2, 12:1-3) announces that the time is coming for the Λόγος/Word to return to the Father and for ὁ παράκλητος to come as a helper for the disciples. In the sharing with the disciples then, this φῶς is referred to as "the life of the world", so that there could be no fear of death when the light/life is present, since darkness and death cannot overcome those who believe in Jesus. It means that as long as he is still in the world, it is daytime. And when speaking to his disciples about the light of the day, he confirms what he had said in John 9:5 "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world/ Ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὦ, φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου". Whitacre agrees, saying that the disciples did not need to worry about what would happen to them for they had the light of the world with them (Whitacre 1999:280).

Having declared this, he resolved to go back to Judea. Jesus now explains why the trip is important: "Our friend Lazarus sleeps but I go that I may raise him up" (verse 11). The metaphor of sleep used to refer to death was not unknown in Judaism (Carson 1991:409; Whitacre 199:281) but, as often in this gospel, the disciples fail to understand Jesus' language, taking it literally (verses 12-13). Jesus has to tell them that Lazarus is dead (verse 14). The announcement of Lazarus' death is presented as a positive event for the sake of the disciples with respect to their faith. Lazarus' death becomes an occasion for rejoicing because it will serve to strengthen the disciples' faith in Jesus once Lazarus has been raised (Köstenberger 2004:331). While verse 4 emphasised the significance of the expected miracle in relation to God (glorification), in verse 15 the emphasis is now on its meaning in relation to the disciples (belief). But looking into the meaning of this glorification from the view of this work in connection with Mary and Martha's role, the glorification of God may be seen in another way. It can refer to the light of Jesus that transcends barriers created by regionalism and kinship ties. And these women, Mary in particular, demonstrated such light by anticipating a community free of those prejudices (ch 12).

Through this last sign - as in the first sign (2:2) - Jesus' actions revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. As a result of the last sign, Lazarus will have life. But Jesus' disciples will also have another kind of life which will be expressed in the transcendence

of the human ties dividing them from other social groups. For instance, Nathanael, whose remark denotes discrimination (a sentiment perhaps shared less overtly by others), learned a new lesson of respect for others. And later on at the dinner the disciples may have learned even more from Mary's bold demonstration as she broke traditional barriers by associating publicly with the Galilean Jesus. The remaining part of the narrative is about Jesus' love that prompted his return to Bethany, despite the risk to his life.

6.3.5.2 B. A public act of sacrificial love defies strife (verses 17-37)

The next scenes are dominated by Jesus' conversation with the mourning sisters. Their meeting takes place in Bethany near Jerusalem where many Judeans are also present. However, Jesus, Mary and Martha are not deterred by the dangers of this environment, although they seem to be aware of the situation. This can be deduced from the precaution taken in Jesus' meeting first with Martha, then with Mary.

6.3.5.2.1 Jesus comforts Martha (verses 17-27)

Jesus is reported to have reached Bethany on the fourth day after Lazarus' death (verse 17). The four days imply that Lazarus died and was buried on the same day that a messenger was sent to Jesus. It is observed that it was important for the narrator to indicate that four days had elapsed since Lazarus' death. There was a well-known Jewish belief that the soul of a dead person remained in the vicinity of the body "hoping to re-enter" for three days, but once decomposition set in, the soul departed (Burge 2000:315). The evangelist wants the reader to understand that what Jesus did in raising Lazarus from the dead was not mere resuscitation.

The detail about Bethany's proximity to Jerusalem (verse 18) explains the presence of many Judeans who had come to comfort the sisters (verse 19) and seems to suggest that many of them were from Jerusalem. If this was the case, the bereaved family may have enjoyed considerable social standing, for although comforting the bereaved was regarded as a religious duty, not every villager would have been consoled in their grief by "many Judeans" from the nearby city (Köstenberger 2004:333). This information further underlines the risk of hostility Jesus was embracing in serving Lazarus (Keener

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2003:842). This vicinity was especially significant because the act of peacemaking of these women, and Mary in particular, would be known in the entire capital city of Jerusalem.

As the narrator points out, when Martha received the news of Jesus' arrival she went to meet him outside the village (verse 20) apparently without telling anybody. Perhaps she knew of the danger Jesus might be in if word spread that he was back in Judea (Keener 2003:843). Martha cares for Jesus' security although she cannot help thinking about the loss of her brother. Like the message these sister sent to Jesus, 'the one you love is sick', her ambiguous words to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died" (verse 21) are also understood by scholars in different ways. Some think that they can be understood as an expression of bitterness, disappointment, rebuke or simply as a lament or even faith (Brodie: 1993:392; Ridderbos 1997:394; Whitacre 1999:285; Keener 2003:843). But one may also argue that these words express the sisters' mixed feelings; they are caring for Jesus' safety in Judea and the same time they need Jesus to come and do something for their brother. She confesses her faith: "Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you (verse 20), which shows that she believes that something can be done for her brother. However, there is a tension between her faith and Jesus' safety in Judea.

In response to Martha's statement of faith, Jesus pushes her to a deeper level of discussion, challenging her with a deeper revelation of himself. In his act of comforting Martha Jesus highlights the disclosure of his identity in the fifth of seven "ἐγώ εἰμι"[80] sayings with predicates in this Gospel (6:35, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). As usual with the "ἐγώ εἰμι" statements, the predicate "resurrection" and "life" describe what Jesus is *in relation to* people*;* they are what he offers to people (Brown 1966:434)*.* He points to himself as "the resurrection and the life" (verse 25). The absolute

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[80] Waetjen argues that Jesus revealed the presence of God when he identified himself, in view of his subsequent use of τὰ ῥήματα (sayings or statements). God's presence, he continues, has been authenticated by the activities that are metaphorically associated with the predicates of Jesus' self-disclosure as 'I am'. Jesus then identified himself metaphorically as follows: I am the Bread of Life, I am the Light, I am the Good Shepherd, I am the Door, I am the Resurrection and Life, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, I am the Vine-stock (Waetjen 2005:371).

validity of this statement is emphasized in a pair of artfully combined statements that express the same truth in a paradoxical manner (Ridderbos 1997:397):

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ κἂν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet will live (verse 25).
καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα and whoever lives and believes in me will never die (verse 26a).

The first line (verse 25b) refers to death in the natural sense and to living in the sense of eternal life. The second line (verse 26a) refers to natural human existence while "never die" refers to eternal life that natural death can neither prevent nor affect (Ridderbos 1997:397). Both statements suggest that the life that comes from believing in Jesus is not interrupted by physical death (Whitacre 1999:286). Jesus had come to Bethany after two days' delay not just to bring Lazarus back to life, but to make the whole family realize that what he has to give them encompasses so much more than what they, in their request, have expected of him (Ridderbos 1997:397). Thus, he confronts Martha with the question: "Do you believe this?" (verse 26b).

Martha's answer, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who is to come into the word" (verse 26), seems not to refer to what Jesus had said himself. This has led to the perception that she may not have fully grasped what Jesus was saying (Whitacre 1999:287; Keener 2003:844). Nevertheless, she answers a question about faith (verse 26b) with a confession of faith (verse 27). To Jesus' "I am", Martha's spontaneous and inhibited reply is "Yes, Lord, you are" (Ridderbos 1997:399). Martha' confession is reminiscent of that of Peter (6:68) and in line with that of John the Baptist (3:28), of Andrew (1:41), the Samaritan woman (4:25, 29), and the healed blind man (9:22, 35-38). Keener notes that Jesus revealed his identity to the Samaritan woman, to Martha and later to Mary Magdalene (20:15-17) and suggests that Jesus may have favoured women and/or those marginalized from the centres of structural powers (Keener 2003:844). After uttering her confession, Martha leaves the scene and Mary is introduced.

6.3.5.2.2 Jesus mourns with Mary (verses 28-37)

According to Martha's own words, she left the scene with Jesus' instruction to call her sister Mary (verse 28). Martha probably called her sister aside to convey this message so

that she could slip away unnoticed by those who had come to offer comfort (Kruse 2003:252). This sense of secrecy expressed by "λάθρᾳ" is slightly different from that clandestine "κρυπτῷ" nature of Jesus' Tabernacle appearance in 7:10. In this context, it seems that Martha speaks this way to her sister to try to prevent the Judeans from knowing that Jesus is near (Howard-Brook 1994:260). Mary needed to go and find Jesus where Martha left him outside the village (verses 29-30). Jesus did not go to the house of mourning but remained at a distance, probably for safety. His desire to keep away from the public failed, however, as Mary came to him escorted by a crowd of mourners (verses 31) who included the Judeans (verses 32) that Jesus may have wished to avoid. It seems that the association between the Galilean and the siblings of Bethany had been clandestine until this time, but Lazarus' death is about to put an end to the secrecy. As her house was in the vicinity of Jerusalem, definitely a significant number of Judeans were there and followed the acts of these women.

As Mary meets Jesus, her sorrowful words are a verbatim repetition Martha's first statement: "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (verse 32). It is as if the two sisters had been discussing among themselves what Jesus' presence would have meant during Lazarus's illness, and reached the same conclusion (Howard-Brook 1994:260). Mary's attitude in meeting Jesus (verses 32-33) and the absence of an expression of continuing faith such as that of her sister, "even now I know…", has led some to criticize her as a being nothing but a complaining woman (Schnackenburg 1984:333 quoted by Carson 1991:415). Ridderbos rejects such judgment, however, considering that the haste (mentioned twice) with which Mary goes out to Jesus, the reverence with which she falls at his feet, and what she says to him demonstrate that she, no less than her sister, puts her trust in him (Ridderbos 1997:401).

One may argue that criticisms of Mary reveal a biased view. It is not clear why she was accused of complaining when she expressed herself with the same words as her sister Martha (verse 32). Martha's additional words to Jesus' response, when she says "I know he will rise again at the resurrection of the last day" (verse 24), do not portray a greater faith. We should also note that Jesus did not consider Mary to be a complaining woman.

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Rather his reaction to her speech and weeping moved him[81] and provoked him into action, asking where Lazarus was laid so he could do more. Mary's speech and weeping, together with those who were with her, pushed Jesus to display his feelings to this family, despite the presence of his foes. The narrator puts it, Ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (v35). In other words, Jesus openly revealed his association with the siblings of Bethany, with the Judeans exclaiming: ἴδε πῶς ἐφίλει αὐτόν. Lazarus' death therefore became a tool for the official demonstration of the transcendence of divisions. Mary and Martha could not hide their transcendence of ethnic, regional and gender barriers from the Judeans any more. As cited above, the climax of their act of associating with the victim was later on demonstrated by Mary's public act of anointing Jesus at the dinner (ch12).

Thus, as the narrator reports, Jesus displayed the transcendence of kinship and regional bias when publicly moved, and burst into tears, weeping for a man from a different region and different social group (verse 35). His sacrificial love, which pushed him to make the risky trip, was publicly manifested. Some see in Jesus' weeping his expression of sorrow at the death of Lazarus and the pain. At the tomb, Jesus' tears received a mixed reaction among the Judeans present at the scene. Some understood Jesus' display of

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[81] Jesus' reaction as he faces Mary and the people accompanying her, all weeping, has been differently understood by scholars. It is reported that ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν. The Greek verb ἐμβριμάομαι has the connotation of snorting (in animals) while ἐτάραξεν is translated "troubled himself" has the connotation of inner agitation and turmoil (Köstenberger 2004:339). In the present context, the two verbs are used to describe Jesus' display of deep emotion, and his attitude was interpreted differently. Some have suggested that Jesus was strongly moved with compassion for Mary when he saw her weeping. Keener seems to subscribe to this view, seeing Jesus' internal disturbance over others' pain as emphasizing his humanity (Keener 2003:846). This interpretation is rejected by many who contend that, in humans, ἐμβριμάομαι usually denotes anger, agitation, and typically some physical expression accompanying it (Keener 2003:846). Those who understood this verb as describing Jesus' anger, however, do not agree on the possible object of this anger. There are those who contend that Jesus was angry at himself for not having come on time to rescue Lazarus, prevent his death and the pain it caused. Against this argument Kruse objects that Jesus could not have been troubled by his delay and the death it may have occasioned since he knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead (Kruse 2003:253). Many more argue that Jesus' anger was caused by the general wailing over Lazarus' death in which continuing unbelief toward his mission manifested itself (Howard Brook 1994:262). In Ridderbos' opinion, this seems to contradict Jesus' own weeping (Ridderbos 1997:401). Another widely supported view is that Jesus was angry at death itself and the pain and sadness it causes, evident in the wailing of the bereaved (Whitacre 1999:289). For Brodie, Jesus' anger was focused first of all on unbelief, but it was also directed against sin, death and the devil (Brodie 1993:395). The motivation of Jesus' emotions in this scene was rather his sensitivity to the tragic situation at Bethany. Jesus had overcome all the barriers which separated his people (kins) from his Bethany friends (the Judeans), such that he had become part of them; their pain was also his pain.

emotion as an expression of sympathetic love (verse 36) but others saw in it an indication of his impotence in the face of death (verse 37). The Judeans' response is used by the narrator to once again point to their opposition, and to describe division among them in their attitude toward him. In their response, the opposing group makes reference to the healing of the blind man. Opposition to Jesus by the Pharisees (9:13-16, 40) or the Judeans (9:18, 22) emerges here, to the point of John stating that "the Judeans had agreed that if anyone should confess him to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue (Esler 2006:116). A similar division appears later, subsequent to Jesus raising Lazarus (verses 45, 46), which may be considered as the climax of the Book of Signs.

6.3.5.3 C. Love overcomes (Lazarus') death: Description of the sign (verses 38--44)

Apparently without entering the residential area of Bethany, Jesus has now reached Lazarus' grave. The scene is a detailed description of his miraculous action of bringing Lazarus back to life. Jesus is the main actor although the reader is repeatedly told that he is in company of other people (verses 39, 41, 44b). The story is brought to its climax by a description of the miracle: the dead man came out, bound hand, foot and face with grave clothes (verse 44). This picture can be contrasted with Jesus' own resurrection that left the grave clothes behind (20:5, 7). Bound in his wrappings, Lazarus could not walk, hence Jesus' command to loose him and let him go (verse 44b). It is noted that Jesus' miracles are often followed by his call upon the human side to do their own part: at Cana, the servants needed to fill the water pots with water (2:7) and the blind man needed to wash his face (9:11); at Bethany they had to remove the binding cloths (verse 44). The account of Lazarus' resurrection is replete with parallels with Jesus' own resurrection, though emphasis is laid more on the contrast between the two. The details that follow focus on the mixed reaction of the witnesses of Jesus' act of love at Bethany.

6.3.5.4 D. Mixed reaction to Jesus' act of love (verses 45-48)

Informed at the beginning that Jesus was not safe in Judea (verses 8, 16), the reader could be curious to see what would happen to him in Bethany. At the close of the account, the reader may be surprised to note that Jesus arrived in Bethany and safely did his work there without facing major opposition. The narrator, however, had his ways of reminding

the reader about Jesus' insecurity in Judea. Jesus' apparent caution in meeting the bereaved sisters not in their home but outside the village (verses 20, 30), the unkind remarks from some Judeans (verse 37) as well as the sisters' discretion in handling the news about Jesus' arrival in Bethany (verse 28) agree with the sense that Jesus was not safe in Bethany.

The focus shifts, however, from the crisis in the Bethany family to the strained relation between Jesus and the Judeans. In recording the reaction to the raising of Lazarus, the narrator's interest is neither in Mary and Martha, nor in Lazarus, but in the Judeans, especially those opposing Jesus.

The reaction to the raising of Lazarus was in two forms. Many of the Judeans believed… but some went to report to the authorities (verses 45-46). The phrasing, "Many of the Jews… but some of them" is typically Johannine (cf. 11:36-37) (Köstenberger 2004:347). The language suggests that the majority believed (Keener 2003:851). Like the first sign (2:11), the last sign produced faith. If, in performing the sign, Jesus manifested his glory, it was those who reported him to the Judean authorities who set him on the road to his ultimate glorification through his death and resurrection (verse 46). It is not explicitly stated whether those of the group who went to report Lazarus' resurrection did it innocently or were informants with malicious intent. It can be assumed, however, that they were aware of the position of these authorities and their concerns about Jesus (9:22). But perhaps Jesus' act of love, exhibited in his risky trip to Bethany to bring Lazarus back to life, provoked Jesus' own death; it exacerbated the animosity of the Judean authorities and revitalized their plan to do away with him (verses 45-57).

6.3.5.5 C`. Love provokes condemnation (verses 47-57)

The news of the raising of Lazarus alarmed the Judean authorities who received the report. The matter was so serious that it called for the meeting of the Sanhedrin (verse 47). This was the supreme Judean court in Jerusalem that comprised the High Priests, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the elite of the society. The Sanhedrin had the responsibility for local rule over the Israelites in the Roman province of Judea. Kruse points out that

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while this court had power to investigate charges related to the violation of the Mosaic law, it walked a tightrope: answering to the Roman governor while at the same time trying to stay in favour with the majority of the people (Kruse 2003:258). The Pharisees and the High Priests had attempted to apprehend Jesus earlier (7:32, 45) and his continuous activity was unsettling them. Now the reaction to the demonstration of his love through the risky trip and the raising of Lazarus provokes his condemnation. The situation called for a radical solution as proposed by Caiaphas, the High Priest: Jesus should die if the nation is to be saved (verse 50).

In his earlier dispute with Judean leaders, Jesus was indicted for blasphemy, for claiming to be the son of God (5:18 ff., 10:33, 36). Now a political dimension was added to charges against him. In the analysis of the Sanhedrin, even if the Romans had no reason to think that Jesus was aiming for political power, they could find grounds to act against him if the popular movement around him was presented to suggest he was a claimant to power who would be dangerous to the state (Ridderbos 1997:408). The situation was about to get out of hand, risking a call for the intervention of Roman authorities. It was then agreed that Jesus should be arrested, though they had not yet reached consensus about the procedure.

The way out of the dilemma is suggested by Caiaphas, the president of the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas is described as the High Priest of that year (verses 49, 51), not meaning that he holds that position only for that year, because he was high priest for nineteen years (Brodie 193:399), but probably to mean that he happened to be the high priest in "that fateful year" when Jesus was tried and crucified (Morris 1995:503). Caiaphas's words are found to represent the epitome of Johannine irony (Keener 2003:855). He charges his colleagues: "You know nothing" and then continues declaring: "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people…" (verse 50). The informed reader of the Gospel will notice that not only do the members of the Sanhedrin lack understanding of the situation, but that Caiaphas himself does not know the significance of what he is saying - that it is good for one man to die for the people (Keener 2003:855).

The evangelist describes Caiaphas' words as a prophetic utterance (verse 51). In the Old Testament, prophecy was occasionally associated with the high priest (Numbers 27: 21) and prophecy was often considered to be unwitting (cf. Philo, *Mos*. 1.49 §274; 1.50 § 277; 1.51 § 283; 1.52 § 286; *Midr*. Ps. 90§ 4) (Köstenberger 2004:353). According to the evaluation of the narrator, Caiaphas did not speak on his own authority (verse 51). The high priest is not relieved of responsibility here, but the evangelist leaves that aside in order to point his readers to the deep evangelical truth that Caiaphas, despite himself and without realizing it, was expressing that Jesus was to die for the salvation of his people (Ridderbos 1997:409). In arguing that one person should die for the sake of the people, in this situation Caiaphas unconsciously sees it necessary to apply the scapegoat principle by which the single death prevents the "destroying' of the "whole nation" (Howard-Brook 1994:266). His argument was convincing; the Sanhedrin resolved to kill Jesus who, being aware of this development, withdrew from the public.

6.3.5.5.1 Jesus withdraws from the public: (verse 54)

Jesus' life had been threatened by a Judean mob many times (5:18; 7:1, 19; 8:59; 10:31) but this time the decision to kill him has been reached at the level of the Sanhedrin, a central and competent authority. The verb used, ἐβουλεύσαντό means that "they took counsel", they "resolved", "determined" or "passed a resolution" (Whitacre 1999:298). Jesus was to pay with his life for having come to Bethany and restoring Lazarus's life. In other words, his act of love to the siblings of Bethany provoked retaliation from his foes. In the face of the increased danger, Jesus was no longer walking about openly among the Judeans (verse 54). The narrator does not explain how Jesus knew about the resolution of the Sanhedrin. The news may have been communicated to him by an informant, through preternatural knowledge, or just common sense (Whitacre 1999:298). In any case, he knew that it was no longer safe for him to stay with his friends in Bethany. He retreated to a place where the risk of meeting with his Judean foes was reduced. It can be surmised that somebody offered accommodation there for him and his disciples.

The scene of the restoration of Lazarus' life indicates that this was achieved at the cost of Jesus' own life. The sign and its aftermath furnished the opportunity for the Jewish

authorities to reach the final decision that Jesus must die (11:45-57) (Chennattu 2006:78). The motif of Jesus offering his own life to save the life of his friend is presented in the story of a boundary-crossing friendship between Jesus and the Bethany sisters. Under an atmosphere of strife, this friendship between Jesus and Mary and Martha resisted the pressure of the hostile environment around them. The Galilean Jesus was rejected by the Judeans who tried to get rid of him by advancing reasons connected to their religious belief. Jesus, however, transcended those regional and kinship divisions and associated with the Judean family at Bethany. The sisters and their brother also displayed an ability to transcend such barriers by overlooking the behaviour of their people and associating with the rejected Galilean.

6.3.5.5.2 Mary and Martha's transcendence of kinship and regional divisions

Jesus was not secure in Judea as the high priests were seeking his life; but the two women did not share the trend of hostility and hatred that the Judeans had toward Jesus. Mary and Martha remained good friends with the targeted outsider and Jesus made their house a resting place. When the mob wanted to stone him, he could feel at home in their home. As Burge asserts, they had become like an extended family for Jesus (Burge 2000:312). Rebera sees Jesus as a close family friend who fits into an extended family system, even though he did not share any blood-ties with this family. According to Rebera, Jesus took on the mantle of an 'old brother or uncle', which in today's expression are the terms of familiarity used to address unrelated males who are close friends of the family (Rebera 1990:96).

Aware of the conflict between Judeans and Jesus and that Bethany was unsafe for him and his disciples, the women appear to have known and kept Jesus' whereabouts quiet. "Only those closest to him, presumably would know where to find him" (Hearon 2004:177). When they urgently needed him they sent him the oblique message, 'the one you love is sick'. This message suggests their dilemma about exposing Jesus to the environment of Judea which confirms that they were informed of his encounter with the authorities in Jerusalem. From that view to bring him back to the vicinity of the city would be dangerous. For Milne, the wording of the message may be a conscious

compromise, not ambiguous as some exegetes believe (Milne 1993:157). As discussed earlier, the other way of expressing their concern about Jesus' safety is also suggested in Martha's relaying Jesus' message to her sister in the house with Judeans. Martha was so secretive that the Judeans who were with Mary could not figure out where she was going. Perhaps Mary did not wish them to know about Jesus' presence in the area either. Worthy of note here is the presence of many Judeans in the women's house, demonstrating that they were able to maintain a good relationship with the neighbours as well as with the Galilean Jesus.

Similar to Jesus' mother and the Samaritan woman, the capacity of Martha and Mary to transcend kinship and regional divisions suggests that had they received some instruction that challenged their former attitudes, even though the narrator does not say this. Being Judeans and having Judean friends and neighbours - some of whom were opponents of Jesus - did not deter these women from maintaining their friendship with him. They were able to openly transcend divisions in a way that was visibly apparent to their neighbours and the Judean authorities – both of whom were still prisoners of such issues. Mary and Martha's attitudes predisposed them to be bridge-builders between Jesus and his opponents in the neighbourhood.

6.3.5.5.3 Mary and Martha's capacity as bridge-builders

At the death of Lazarus, people gathered at Mary and Martha's home to comfort them. Although some of these people may have come as a way of demonstrating their piety (Keener 2003:847), since comforting the bereaved was a highly regarded work of charity that no pious Jew neglected (Schnackenburg 1980:329), it can be surmised that most of the people present were family and friends of the two sisters. Some came from neighbouring Jerusalem and included those who opposed Jesus and his teachings. Because Mary and Martha had succeeded in maintaining good relations with their Judean neighbours despite their strong friendship with Jesus and his disciples, members of both groups were received in their home. The death of Lazarus offered an opportunity for the two groups to actually meet, not to fight, but to mourn together. It offered his sisters the opportunity to bridge the gap between Jesus and some of his opponents from Jerusalem.

This happened because of their attitude to promote peace in their community. Mary and Martha were able to resist the possible pressure and negative influence from the neighbours who were Jesus' staunch opponents and hated him, nonetheless keeping a good relationship with them. This is demonstrated in the number of Jews who were in their home (verse 19).

Interestingly, both groups of mourners are united by their compassion and love for the sisters. The narrator emphasizes that Jesus, in the midst of the people who do not like him, cannot hide his feelings. He weeps and mourns for the death of a Judean man, not a Galilean. On the other hand, the attitude displayed by the Judeans present in Bethany is not that of hostility to Jesus, at least at the grave, but that of sympathy for the bereaved women. They broke into tears as well. The sisters' feelings of sorrow brought together the feelings of the two groups; at Lazarus' grave they shared emotions and they wept together (verses 34, 35). "Such loud public displays of grief were common in this culture" (Burge 2000:317). At Bethany, Mary and Martha became the point of contact for the mourners because they were not part of the divisions between the parties. If they had taken sides with one group, the other group would probably not have come to support them. Later on, Mary took another step, demonstrating her transcendence of the divisive barriers, in her public act of anointing Jesus at the dinner.

6.3.5.6 B`. A public act of shameful love defies death John 12:1-8

As noticed above, there is a narrative gap at the beginning of the story; the author announces Mary's act of anointing as already completed. But as discussed earlier, this was a proleptic announcement of what was to come later after Lazarus' resurrection (ch 12). When the author narrates the story, he identifies Lazarus as a "brother of Mary the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair" (John 11:2). This narrative gap seems to emphasize the anointing as the centre of the Lazarus story. Köestenberger notes that when Mary's act is reported in the next chapter, a single verse is dedicated to such a tremendous act while five verses are given to Judas' taking offense and Jesus' rebuttal, which seems to emphasize Judas' imminent betrayal (Köestenberger 2004:358). However, the focus of the entire section 12:1-11 is not on Judas' treachery but

rather Mary. Her crucial act becomes the focus and the climax of one single narrative account stretching from 10:40 to 12:11, brought into stark relief by Judas' words.

From the analytical lens of peacemaking and reconciliation applied in this study, mention of Mary's act at the outset of the story emphasizes that it is the culmination of the reconciliation process she and Martha began earlier. At the dinner, Mary publicly displayed her reconciliatory act in front of the guests, specifically the large group of *Ioudaioi*. She directed her act towards the one they hated and wanted to kill, thereby transcending barriers which separated her Judean kin-group from the Galilean Jesus. While perhaps these women organized the dinner to recognize what Jesus did for their brother, Mary also wanted to declare their act of reconciliation to their people, letting go of all physical ties related to their region and social groups. She demonstrates her association with the Galilean Jesus in the face of the intention of the Judean authorities to execute him (verse 53).

The anointing of Jesus with an expensive perfume and wiping his feet with her hair displayed her selfless act of associating with him in presence of his foes. For Mary, this hated Galilean man, pursued to be killed, is as precious as or even more precious than any of her kin-people. Even though in such an environment the act was risky and could cost her and her family's life, perhaps she wanted to challenge the antagonistic community around her to overcome prejudices about members of a different group or region. According to her sacrificial act, the message to her fellow Judeans could be that actually something good can come from Galilee.

Moreover, at the dinner, Mary displays not only the transcendence of blood and regional barriers, but her transcending of traditional and cultural ties in a radical way. Not only did she pour expensive oil on the Galilean man's feet, she went beyond and used her precious hair to wipe them. By so doing, she openly proclaimed her transcendence of the fear of being ridiculed and shamed. Waetjen argues that both the acts of anointing[82] and wiping

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[82] The significance of Mary's act of anointing extends to another level. It is not the emphasis of this work, but is very important to consider. For some "Mary's action is clearly a foreshadowing of Jesus own self-

with her hair "convey a sense of intimacy and adoration and in the circumstance of men reclining at dinner in a context of honor/shame culture, her loving devotion might be seen as shameless" (Waetjen 2005:289). Moloney believes that, "Of the two women in the story Mary is the one who made the most promising response to the presence of Jesus" (Moloney 1998:334). Indeed Mary may have risked her life by engaging in such an act of associating with the rejected Galilean man but the narrator indicates that she was determined to do so by preparing such costly oil and also using her hair on a man's feet. Mary's act mirrors Rwandan women's obligation to be peacemakers and bridge-builders, which, in some situations during and even after the genocide could cost their lives.[83] Her act, however, prompted a crisis among the religious authorities which marks a turning point in the life of Jesus.

6.3.5.7 A`. A crisis for the ruling elite: John 12:9-11

The narrator shifts from Jesus' discussion with Judas about Mary's act and specifies that a large crowd of Judeans found out that Jesus was at that dinner (verse 9). This statement is in response to the order of the ruling elite's request that anyone with information on the whereabouts of Jesus should report to them. Waetjen comments that at last Jesus had been located. The crowd had found him (Waetjen 2005:290) where Mary had anointed him in the presence of other people. At this point, a crisis breaks out. Two major incidents contributed to this crisis: first was the presence of the resurrected Lazarus in public, which confirmed the proclamation of Jesus as Messiah; second was Mary's anointing of his feet, which represented a challenge to the legitimacy of the Judean ruling elite. Mary's act carries with it two main messages: at one level it announces Jesus' forthcoming death, but at another level it announces who he is as the Messiah. Provoked

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sacrifice upon the cross" (Davis 1994:190). Ngewa continues saying that by anointing Jesus, "Mary had already initiated Jesus' death. What she did had a theological implication of which she was not aware. The day of Jesus' burial had begun" (Ngewa 2003:226). Considering what happened at the cross, the author does not tell us if Mary had another occasion to anoint Jesus' body. Perhaps other women were able to help Nicodemus. Köstenberger believes that Joseph and Nicodemus might have not wrapped the body themselves, "more likely they used slaves in order not to contradict ritual impurity" (Köstenberger 2004:554). If Mary was not among those who helped Nicodemus, it may confirm Ngewa's interpretation of Jesus' response to Judas: "If Mary did not offer this service to Jesus now, she might never be able to do so in future. But she would be able to help the poor at any time" (Ngewa 2003:226). The act of Mary confirmed Jesus' Messaihiship the one who was to come into the world as expressed in 19:38-40.

[83] This is elaborated in the next chapter on dialogue between Rwandan women and the women in John.

by the shameless act of love of Mary to the condemned Galilean Jesus, the chief priests conclude their plans to kill both Jesus and Lazarus. This decision of the Judean ruling elite exhibits their failure to transcend the barriers in the manner portrayed by Mary's act. Instead of the transformation of their consciousness to overcome the barriers, they maintained walls of division and hostility based on their social and regional ties, despite Mary and Martha's exemplary acts in that domain.

But it should be noted that all women are not necessarily always peacemakers. They can also fuel conflict, as in the example of the woman gate-keeper (John 18:17).

6.4 The woman gate-keeper
6.4.0 Introduction
The generally positive characterization of women in the Fourth Gospel may not be a deliberate bias in their favour. This is indicated by the negative role played by a servant girl, gate-keeper[84] in the trial of Jesus (John 18:15-17). It is useful to examine the case of this woman as it helps to look at another side of women's attitudes to conflict in their community. Although it is a very brief passing incident, it provides a narrative gap which intrigues and catches the attention of anyone used to the problems of violence and peacemaking, as we shall see in chapter seven.

This present section will not require an analysis of a large portion of a biblical text, except to situation the short passage which concerns us here in its context. The attitude of the woman gate-keeper is referred to in only one verse (John 18:17) of a larger narrative (John 18) which otherwise is not intended to tell her story. However, even that verse needs to be understood in its own context. The exposition of the verse will be preceded by its location in the context of the chapter that contains it. This requires a brief overview of the setting, location and structure of the chapter itself.

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[84] This woman is identified as a gate-keeper because of her work in the text. The narrator specifies that she was on "duty" (verse16)… "at the door" (verse17).

6.4.1 Setting of John 18 and location in the Fourth Gospel

This chapter describes the first part of Jesus' passion focusing on his arrest and trials, while the second part of the passion described in chapter 19 reports Jesus' condemnation, crucifixion, death and burial. The events reported in chapter 18 are happening during the last week of Jesus' life, a few days from the Passover. They follow Jesus' farewell discourse from chapter 14 that ends with his prayer for his present and future disciples in chapter 17. It is after this prayer that he and his disciples cross the brook at the Kidron Valley near Jerusalem to go to the garden. The detachment sent by the high Priest to arrest Jesus will find him here. It was apparently night time, as the chief priests and Pharisees were carrying torches and lanterns (18:3). This passion narrative is the climax of the second part of the Fourth Gospel, the part that has been called the Book of Glory (chapters 13-20), following the first part called the Book of Signs (chapters 1-12). The time has now come for Jesus to be glorified (12:23, 28; 17:1) not through the signs that he performs, but through his death and resurrection. Chapter 18 can be structured according to different stages of Jesus' trials.

6.4.2 Structure of John 18

This chapter reports the process of Jesus' arrest and trial first before the Jewish high priest Annas (verse 13) then before the Roman governor. The accounts of the trials alternate with the accounts of Peter's denial of Jesus. The chapter can be outlined as follows:

- Jesus' arrest in the garden: 18:1 -11
- Jesus' trial before Annas and Peter's first denial: 18: 12-23
- Jesus' trial before Caiaphas and Peter's second and third denial: 18: 24-27
- Jesus' first trial before Pilate: 18: 28-38
- Jesus' second trial before Pilate: 18: 39-40

The woman gate-keeper is referred to in the account of Jesus' first trial before Annas (verses 12-23) in the report of Peter's first denial (verses 15-17). It is this sub-section

reporting Peter's first denial that is discussed here. The relevant text requiring exposition is limited to John 18:15-17.

6.4.3 Exposition of John 18:15-17

The incident of Peter's first denial is reported in the process of the narration of Jesus' trial before Annas. More than an incident, however, Peter's denial was foretold by Jesus (13:38) in his speech after the last supper as he announced to his disciple his impending passion (chapter 13). Peter's denial happens and is reported three times, suggesting that the narrator found this an important detail to mention.

It is reported that Peter followed Jesus (verse 15). This means that he followed Jesus after he was arrested in the garden and was taken to Annas (verses 12-13). Peter and another unnamed disciple went as far as the courtyard of the high priest (verse 15). This high priest is understood to be Annas as indicated in verse 13. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest who had convinced the Sanhedrin to arrest Jesus (11:49-50). Annas was supposed to have retired from the office of the high priest, removed by the Roman authorities, but he was succeeded by his five sons and then by his son-in-law (Kruse 2003:352). The seasoned and aged Annas still wielded considerable high-priestly power while his relative held the title (Köstenberger 2004:516), as the Jewish people regarded the office of priesthood as a life office (Kruse 2003:352).

Peter had vowed to follow Jesus and even to lay down his life for him (13:37). Although Jesus had told him that he could not fulfil what he was promising, Peter attempted to keep his word, first in trying to fight those who came to arrest Jesus (18:10), then, after being rebuked for this, by following Jesus until the high priest's courtyard (verse 15). Peter seems not to be familiar with this place as he needs to be introduced by the anonymous disciple who was with him, known to the high priest (verse 16). Many commentators have identified this anonymous disciple with the "beloved disciple" who is repeatedly anonymous in this gospel. Keener observes that this picture would fit the author's repeated comparison of Peter with the beloved disciple (verse 13; verses 23-24; 20:4-8) (Keener 2003:1091). Kenner thinks that Peter would be referred to in this episode

as the "beloved disciple". Moreover, Keener remarks that the nearly uniform opposition to Judeans, especially those of the Jerusalem elite, earlier in the Gospel, makes an identification with one of Jesus' Galilean followers more difficult to conceive (Keener 2003:1091). It would be better to think of someone from Jerusalem who was less connected with Jesus – for example, a secret disciple like Joseph of Arimathea (19:38; cf. also 12:42) or Nicodemus (Ridderbos 1997:581). The identity of this anonymous disciple seems not to be important to the narrator's story; he focuses his attention on Peter's entry into the courtyard of the high priest and the drama which plays out there.

Peter was stranded at the door outside the courtyard until the anonymous disciple, more familiar with the place, intervened to speak for him to the servant girl keeping the door, who then allowed him in (verse 16). The servant girl could see that Peter was an acquaintance of the anonymous disciple, and should have guessed that Peter had something to do with Jesus. There would be little reason for a stranger to be there in the courtyard in the middle of a cold night (Whitacre 1999:431). Yet, the servant girl asked Peter about his relationship with Jesus, the indicted man. Her question was: Μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν εἶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου; (you are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?) (verse 17). This question, introduced by Μὴ, is formulated in a way that suggests that the answer expected by the girl was "no". This formulation could also express a cautious assertion (Carson 1991:582). The question may not have been hostile so much as cynical (Carson 1991:582). The reference to Jesus as τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου (this man) suggests some disdain, as does the use of Μή (not), here in the sense of "surely not you too" (Whitacre 1999:431). The servant girl apparently did not have a high opinion of Jesus (Ridderbos 1997:582). The καὶ συ (you too) has been understood to allude to the anonymous disciple already known to the servant girl (Köstenberger 2004:514), but the expression could allude to all other disciples, in which case the girl's question could mean: "Are you another of this man's disciples?" (Carson 1991:583).

The servant girl's question was disconcerting for Peter. Not wanting to be identified as Jesus' follower, he tersely answered: "I am not" (verse 17). Some say that Peter had no excuse for his denial. He was not in a position of legal difficulty since there was no

warrant for his arrest. nor is there any indication that he was physically threatened by this woman or others. This argument overlooks the fact that justice in the ancient world could be arbitrary (Whitacre 1999:431). Peter should not have been afraid, say others, since he was in the company of the other man who was known to be a disciple yet was accepted without problem (Kruse 2003:354). Things seem not to have been that easy for Peter, and in Keener's opinion, it would not be surprising if his contemporaries had followed the same course (Kenner 2003:1091).

A more sympathetic evaluation of Peter's attitude considers his presence at the high priest's place to be a bold move. Long before Jesus was arrested, the many attempts to stone him had frightened the disciples so much that they preferred to keep away from Judea (11:8). No warrant of arrest was needed to understand that they could share in Jesus' fate (11:16; 13:37). Jesus' plea that he alone be apprehended, not his disciples (verse 8), suggests that the whole group was targeted. Jesus' arrest brought the disciples' fear to its peak and all of them ran for their lives, apart from Peter, and probably the unnamed disciple, if he was also in the garden at the moment of arrest.

Peter had even more reason to fear repression since he had openly taken part in Jesus' defence, violently resisted his arrest and in the process, wounded Malchus, a high priest's servant (verse 10). If this girl was aware of that act, it may explain her hostility. Perhaps she was able to identify him by his appearance, different from those familiar to her, either by regional dress or features. She could notice that Peter was not from that region and would have identified him as a Galilean by his accent in speaking. Although he was courageous enough to follow Jesus to the high priest's place, Peter wished to sneak into the courtyard without being identified. But the remark of the servant girl exposed him.

6.4.3.1 The unsettling remark of the woman gate-keeper

The servant girl's question to Peter: "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" is not necessarily hostile (Kruse 2003:354). It seems, however, that the woman was neither friendly with Peter nor sympathetic to Jesus. Her reference to Jesus as "this man" and her implied expectation that Peter could not be associated with him connotes lack of

esteem if not disdain for both men. For the reader who knows that Jesus was an innocent man being victimized at the hands of the harsh members of the Sanhedrin (11:48-57), Jesus and his few supporters, including Peter deserved sympathy. From this perspective, the woman's disdainful and intimidating question classifies her among those who mistreated Jesus and his followers and despised those from outside the Judean region.

The woman may not have intended to go any further even if Peter was found to be Jesus' disciple. She was not part of the investigating group. But her remark implies that she would have made a fuss if he identified himself and this was dangerous for Peter. What she did was harmful, obliging Peter to hide behind a dishonourable lie. The narrator's description of Peter suggests that for his own safety he was trying to be as inconspicuous as possible (Köstenberger 2004:515). The girl's directness or perhaps even malice exposed him while he was trying to hide his identity.

In the ethnic/racial conflict and tribal clashes in Rwanda, especially during the genocide, a person's identity was used to determine whether one would live or die. In this light, Peter might have perceived the disclosure of his identity as a death sentence. In Peter's understanding, the woman's remark made him vulnerable to anybody who wished to indict him for complicity with the accused Jesus. Being recognized as Jesus' follower would not itself have been a crime punishable by the law if there was a stable system of justice and "due process". But there was none, especially for the poor in the ancient world. Peter knew that Jesus' arrest and prosecution were not following legal procedure. He could fear being unjustly accused, as Jesus was, by both the high priest and the people around him. The servant girl's intrusion was distressing for Peter.

From the view of peacemaking, the woman's question classifies her among those who were pursuing Jesus and his followers. She may be identified amongst the 'perpetrators' persecuting Jesus even though she was not part of the group of those who condemned him; her question was enough to make Peter vulnerable as it could attract the attention of the group to him. Her attitude toward Peter results in a double betrayal: she betrayed Peter and then Peter betrayed Jesus. Considering the women in the previous texts - the

mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, and Mary and Martha - the woman gate-keeper was untransformed. In pointing to her act, perhaps the narrator wanted to emphasize that she did not have any instruction from Jesus about the transcendence of human ties, unlike the women above. This woman, Köestenberger argues, may be of a mature age, since her role was one of responsibility requiring judgment and life experience (Köestenberger 2004:514). But she failed to side with the victim; rather she seems to have informed on Peter.

Her attitude was not a positive one in that situation of crisis because the disclosure of his Peter' s identity could put him in danger as his reaction confirms (18:17). Still holding on to the limitation of kinship and regionalism, the woman could only see Peter as a Galilean and his relationship with Jesus the Galilean. Her question "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" excludes Peter from being part of the woman's people. Aware of the danger of being associated with Jesus and disassociated from the gate-keeper, Peter feels threatened. Immediately he answered, "I am not" (John 18:17).

Thus, the gatekeeper's question and 'finger' was enough for Peter to feel insecure. Moreover, Peter was asked the same question about his relationship with Jesus by another person in verse 25. The formulation of the second question reveals that the person who asked it had followed the dialogue with Peter and the woman: "*Surely* you are not another of his disciples?" Then another person who was actually in the garden when Jesus was arrested came up to identify Peter (verse 26). Probably the 'finger' of the gate-woman pointed at Peter raised suspicion for the people who were around. Considering the kind of 'interrogation' which followed, it is likely that the woman notified other people about the presence of Peter.

6.5 Summary
The present chapter has analysed five biblical texts from the Gospel of John in which women play a significant role. Although not all of the selected texts make the women the main character around whom the story revolves, these women are nevertheless key characters. Without them the stories would be different. The study focussed on the

characterization of these women, each portrayed taking part in a situation of crisis resolution or, in one case, of crisis creation, with the view to establish a dialogue between their attitude in their contexts and the attitude of contemporary Rwandan women in times of social crises.

Investigation of the role of the mother of Jesus at the Cana wedding and at the cross (John 2:1-12 and 19:25-27) reveals that she is credited with noticing the problem even before the most concerned men were aware, and she initiated its solution. She was able to have a positive influence, made possible by her transcendence of kinship and blood ties; in so doing she prevented conflict at the wedding. As she transcended kinship ties, at the cross she was declared a mother in a new and broad community of faith where her influence would become wide.

The story narrated in John 4:1-42 involves a woman of Samaria who well understood the traditions of her social group. These traditions included issues of prejudice and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and religion. The position of the woman changed gradually, however, as she listened to Jesus and learnt from his wisdom. Her attention to what Jesus said led her to discover that not all Jews are necessarily "racists" and that a Jewish man can be of great help to her, more than she could ever imagine. At the end of her learning experience, the prejudices upheld in her tradition had lost their weight and she was ready to enthusiastically associate with a Jewish man. The Samaritan woman, like the mother of Jesus, was able to transcend ethnic group identity, gender prejudice and religious differences. She then became an effective mediator for reconciliation between the Samaritans and the Jews. Because of her act, walls of division and prejudice were brought down; many of her people associated with Jesus and his disciples.

The account of Jesus' last sign, the raising of Lazarus narrated in John 11:1-12:1-11, depicts Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, as two of the main characters, after Jesus the protagonist. Mary and Martha are portrayed in a good light, especially in their love for Jesus. The narrator makes it clear that not only do they love Jesus immensely; they love him even though he is rejected by Judean neighbours and authorities, the opinion leaders

in their community. The women's love for Jesus resists strife and hostility, displaying their transcendence of divisions in their community. Another element of the strength of these women implicit in the story is illustrated in their ability to love Jesus openly without losing their friendship with the neighbours who oppose him. As a result of their attitude and ability to sustain relationships with both, the women are able to play a mediatory role between Jesus and his opponents.

The climax of their mediatory role was exhibited by Mary at the dinner when she publicly demonstrated her act of bridge-building between the rejected Jesus and the Judean authorities. Mary decided to use the opportunity of the dinner to declare her support for Jesus by doing the unusual and "shameful" act of anointing him and wiping his feet with her hair. In their attitudes and actions that transcended kinship and regional differences and built bridges, Mary and her sister Martha made a difference in their community by associating with a Galilean who was rejected and condemned by Judean authorities. In this respect Mary and Martha's attitude would confirm their quality as true *Nyampinga* (women who are agents of harmony in traditional Rwandan culture).

This quality is lacking in the characterization of the servant girl, the gate-keeper of the passion narrative in the fifth text (John 18:15-17). The account of Jesus' arrest and trial includes episodes reporting Peter's denial. In the first of these episodes, reference is made to a woman who plays a minor role in the account, a gate-keeper who asks only one simple question, but her role is important enough to be mentioned by the narrator. Her question creates a narrative gap which perhaps the narrator does not want to clarify. In terms of the focus on peacemaking in this study, her question was provocative and led to Peter's denial. Failing to side with the victim, her attitude was hostile and led to a 'denunciation' of Peter to the males who came to question him afterwards. That question was asked in a wrong place, a wrong way, and in wrong circumstances. It was in a context where Peter did not wish his identity to be disclosed. The woman's question had an intimidating effect on Peter whose reaction was the shocking betrayal of Jesus, his master and the protagonist in the narrative. If the intentions of the woman are not explicitly described, the negative effect of her question remains. She is remembered by

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the reader as the woman who intimidated Peter, exposing him. Because of her unsettling question, she is characterized as siding with the oppressor rather than providing rescue for the victim.

CHAPTER 7. APPROPRIATION: THE DIALOGUE OF RWANDAN WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT, WITH THE WOMEN IN JOHN

7.0 Introduction

This research work analysed five selected texts from the Gospel of John provide different contexts of crises in which women play a significant role by the means of the Tri-polar exegetical model. The study of these texts allowed the characterization and attitudes of the women to be examined. In this chapter it brings the acts and attitudes of those women into dialogue with the attitudes of Rwandan women in times of social crises. This dialogical analysis is the object of the chapter; it falls under the last pole of the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model, the appropriation.

This chapter therefore is an interaction between women from the Rwandan context and women from the context of the Fourth Gospel. The dialogue is held against the background of situations of conflict in both contexts. It was motivated by the Rwandan situation of civil conflict which culminated in the Rwandan genocide. The chapter intends to highlight the main strategies that the women in John used successfully in their peacemaking and reconciliatory acts that may serve as an inspiration to Rwandan women in their role of peacemaking and reconciliation in their communities. This moment of the model aims at 'clarifying the message of the texts and assisting the act of owning it'. The interaction with the strategies used by women in the selected texts provides a foundation for involving Rwandan women in that role. We proceed with the interaction between the two contexts, based on their similarities.

7.1 Similarities between the Rwandan context and the context of the Fourth Gospel

Among the points of similarity which characterise the contexts of John and Rwanda is the way women were treated. Being patriarchal societies, women met with overwhelming obstacles concerning their participation in the development of their communities.

7.1.1 Women's plight and participation in the society

Hanson and Oakaman relate that "Palestine and the ancient Mediterranean as a whole was patriarchal in its structures and assumptions, and this was a foundation stone in their worldview. This means that the public aspects of the society were heavily controlled by males" (Hanson and Oakaman 1998:24). Women therefore did not have the same opportunity as men to be involved in the development of their nation. In the same way, until recent years, Rwandan society limited the participation of women; they were only allowed to contribute to the development of their families through their housework. In both societies women were respected for the good management of their households and as producers of heirs (male children) to their husbands. In Rwandan society, even today, a woman who gives birth only to female children is considered to be a barrier to the expansion of the family. The society, and especially her family in-law, portray her as one who 'extinguishes' the family: *Aba aciye umuryango*. In many cases, such women are hated and repudiated. This view is similar to the Jewish way of discriminating against women. As was seen in the previous chapter, the birth of a female was sad news and "Anyone who does not have a son is dead" (Ilan 1995:44-45). The discrimination against women therefore contributed to their limited involvement in community affairs.

In both societies, discrimination against women was reflected in the lack of education for female children. Women were denied education outside of their homes and the training they did receive was oriented towards keeping the family, taking care of the husbands and the children. Training which prepared for outside activities was only for boys. Because of the lack of a proper exposure to the affairs of the community and to national development, women were looked down upon as stupid and ignorant people who could not contribute to the building of society. It was observed that in the Mediterranean region, a few females from elite families could acquire some education, but still not at the same level as the boys. Against this kind of background, in both contexts, it was almost impossible to have women in leadership. Some differences, however, were observed.

7.2 Differences between the plight and participation women in their communities

Rwandan culture had some differences which are worth noticing. It reserved a few opportunities for women to contribute to certain layers of leadership. As it was discussed in chapter four, some of the Rwandan cultural practices allowed select women to participate actively in the community because of their traditional leadership positions. This opportunity was granted to the queen-mother and sometimes to the queen. Moreover, women were highly respected for having spiritual power which was needed by men (husbands or sons) during the time of battle. Culturally, women could exercise some influence on their sons and husbands to stop them from being involved in conflict. Thus, indirectly, women played important roles even though they were not allowed to participate in wars. Additionally, women, according to tradition, had some spiritual power in other realms. They played a crucial role in protecting and even providing economically. They were considered to be a source of prosperity because of their spiritual power in obtaining a good harvest. Unfortunately these cultural practices were banned with the arrival of the Christian belief system. Nonetheless, some of these practices are still followed, though in a hidden way because of fear of the prevailing Christian faith that spans the country.

Christianity, however, and colonialism made some positive changes, especially after independence. Women were allowed to attend school, though at a very low level. They were also allowed to attend church even though they were not allowed to participate in any aspect of leadership. It was only much later that they formed women's organizations through which they could participate in some activities in the church.

Having reviewed the main findings highlighted in this work, the next section identifies the main strategies that contributed to the success of the peacemaking role of the women in John, and discusses how these strategies may be an inspiration for the Rwandan women in their role of peacemaking.

7.3 Main strategies used by women from the selected texts in their peacemaking roles

Women from the selected texts who may serve as a mirror for Rwandan women's peacemaking role were the mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman and the two sisters of Bethany, Mary and Martha. The woman gatekeeper revealed a negative aspect which should be avoided by the peacemaking agents.

a. *The mother of Jesus:*

The main strategies used by Jesus' mother that enabled her to prevent the conflict in the Cana wedding consist of:

- o Her awareness of the problematic situation in the wedding
- o Her revised influence after the initial rebuke of Jesus; she exhibited the transcendence of blood ties which opened the door for a wider influence because of her motherhood to a wider community (John 19:25-27)
- o Her willingness to step back from the limelight after her successful intervention

b. *The Samaritan woman:*

She was an agent for a restored relationship and a bridge-builder between her community and Jesus and his disciples because of:

- o Her readiness for instruction
- o Her transcendence of prejudices based on kinship, myths of origin, religion and gender barriers
- o Her boldness and willingness to testify to her community about her transcendence of the divisive barriers

c. *Mary and Martha:*

They were able to play a reconciliatory role between Jesus and the Judeans because of:

- o Their transcendence of regionalism and kinship divisions
- o Their positive attitude of connecting to both groups in conflict and being able to bring them together in mourning and in meal.

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       o   Mary's selfless act of love through which she publicly sided with the victim and broke traditional and social barriers

    d. *The woman gate-keeper:*

She played a negative role in peacemaking because of:

       o   Her failure to side with the victim

       o   Pointing him out, as one of the victimized group, to those who might kill him

Interaction with these characters may provide inspiration for other women in their role of peacemaking and reconciliation. With this in mind, the next section begins with the example of Jesus' mother.

7.3.1 Women's awareness of a problematic situation: the example of Jesus' mother

In many societies, women are the ones who first learn about a problem. Sometimes they become aware of a problem because they are involved in some way in situations or occasions, such as weddings, funerals, or parties of different kinds. Or it may be because of their inclination to read between the lines in analysing problematic situations. Because of that faculty, they are able to notice unusual situations before the problem surfaces. In the wedding at Cana in Galilee, Jesus' mother demonstrated this attentiveness. When the master of ceremony and the servants had not shown any sign of awareness about the shortage of wine, Jesus' mother noticed it and alerted her son (John 2:3).

The emphasis of the narrator on the shortage of wine at the outset of the story shows the significance of wedding wine in that culture. Köstenberger may be right in their observations that culturally, in that setting, running out of the wedding wine was considered to be a major social *faux pas*, since the host was responsible for providing the wedding guests with wine for seven days (Köstenberger 2004:93). In fact, the geographical location of the wedding in a non-prominent area is significant for this work because of the perception of a wedding from a Rwandan worldview and culture. Normally, a Rwandan wedding is viewed as a celebration involving the whole family. As in many other cultures, a wedding celebration in Rwanda observes certain cultural practices, though the cultural emphasis varies according to the geographical location,

specifically in terms of rural areas or big cities. The perception of culturally-related mistakes which may occur in a wedding celebrated in a rural area will not have the same weight if the same mistakes happen in a big city. The weight will be much heavier in the rural area than in a big city because of the different emphasis on the importance of culture. The big city is a multicultural place with people from various regions who are not so concerned about cultural issues. But Rwanda does not have very big cities. The majority of the population live in the rural areas; indeed the country looks like an extended village. Consequently, the people are more conservative; only a very few from the capital city seem to show some signs of a diluted culture and to be less culturally bound. The location of Cana in a rural area is therefore very significant here because of its similarities with the Rwandan region.

The fact that the family hosting the wedding had run out of wine threatened a serious loss of honour. Friends, especially those from the inner group of wedding celebrants, used to send gifts, particularly wine, ahead of time to be available for the wedding celebration. Lack of wine thus portrayed a lack of friends (Malina 1998:66) and a loss of honour. In the Ancient Near East, such social disgrace could also lead to a feud between the two families brought into a new relationship by the wedding. Lack of wine could be the source of conflict in the family of the bride as well as in the hosting family, the family of the bridegroom. Jesus' mother therefore prevented a situation of shame from materialising for the new couple.

The act of Jesus' mother at Cana addressed the conflict before it appeared publicly in the wedding. Because of her access to the information beforehand, she was able to alert the appropriate people to work on a solution to the problem before it could degenerate into an irredeemable situation of shame. This strategy adopted by the mother of Jesus could be of great use if it had been followed by the Rwandan women before the genocide.

7.3.1.1 Inspiration for the Rwandan women
The situation of having no wine at the wedding, despite the likely consequences of shame and, possibly, feuding, has nowhere near the gravity of the Rwandan situation. The roots

of the conflict, the tragedy of the genocide and the consequences of women's failing to act on their precognition or awareness of a simmering problem are enormously over proportionate to the story of Jesus' mother's noticing the problem at the wedding. Having acknowledged this and putting it to one side for the moment, the focus of this thesis is on women's strategies used in times of crisis in particular contexts. It is possible to compare the strategies used by Jesus' mother, their effectiveness and their transferability, with actions Rwandan women might take in averting a crisis situation.

Given their cultural roles as peacemakers, Rwandan women were expected to display that ability before the genocide but failed to do so. Our analysis in chapter four provided some clarification and understanding concerning their failure to intervene for peace. The patriarchal biased politics of the country, which did not allow women's involvement in the leadership, was a major handicap for women's access to the kind of information which might have enabled them to play a peacemaking role. The number of women who would have access to such information was meagre. As it was pointed out before, the only woman who was in a position of knowing what was going on, and who tried to take action to avert the crisis, was assassinated as a way of silencing her.

The lack of education for women in the Rwandan patriarchal society is counted among the reasons for the absence of their voices in the political issues of the country. It was noticed in chapter four that just prior to the genocide women were trained in some sectors, but not to the extent of being part of the governance of the country. Young girls were to stay at home helping their mothers. The priority in terms of education was given to boys who were the 'potential leaders' (Mukangiliye 1980:70). The education of female children came in very late and was even too elementary to open doors for women into leadership positions. Waller confirms: "In the area of government and administration, there were no women ministers until the coalition government of 1992. Nor were there any women prefects or burgomasters (communal administrators)…" (Waller 1996: 56). From this perspective, it was very hard or even impossible to have information about the problematic Rwandan situation beforehand. The sad position for the majority of Rwandan women is that they are peasants whose analytical capacity could not reach such a level of

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awareness. They only received information when the situation was beyond control and it was too late to do anything.

However, in the current situation after the genocide, perhaps women's awareness can be of help to the country. Most of the Rwandan population is wounded in one way or the other. Some are survivors of the genocide without any members of their family left. Others are left alone, as the members of their families are jailed or have died in jails. As in any other society which has undergone such violent conflict, some are jailed for the right causes, others unjustly. Those whose family members are victims of injustice, mistreated and jailed, hold in their hearts the bitterness that cannot be voiced. There are also those who are out of the country and are pursued because of true or false allegations of being involved in the genocide. Members of these different types of people live together in the same villages and communities. Some enjoy favour with the government[85] while others are discriminated against in some domains. These few observations may help one to understand the kind of atmosphere in the country, especially in the rural areas. It is in this situation that Rwandan women are called to play the role of reconciliation, each one at her level. Awareness of problematic situations may exist, but for such awareness to bear the right fruit it may require the combination of attributes and actions. It can begin at the local level and in simple but effective ways. To this end, the next section examines other skills Jesus' mother combined with her awareness of the problem and how the combination may be applied to the Rwandan situation.

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[85] Discrimination is evidenced, for instance, at burial ceremonies of people killed during the genocide. While the Tutsi victims of genocide are officially recognized and the surviving members of their families can openly pay them tribute at their burial ceremonies, the Hutus are not allowed to do the same to the members of their families who were also victims of the genocide. Furthermore, while Hutu and Tutsi women are both widows of the Rwandan genocide, only Tutsi women are allowed to burry their husbands with dignity. During the official month of commemoration of the Rwandan genocide, Hutu widows are not allowed to mourn the death of their husbands or other members of their families. This expands to other advantages provided to survivors of the genocide; while the Tutsi orphans of the genocide are assisted in school, the Hutu orphans whose parents were also victims of the genocide are not cared for. This segregation creates antagonism among the population. It may prove to be the root of further conflict, preventing true and lasting reconciliation, as it continues to fuel hatred in the population.

7.3.1.2 Women's influence on men, the interaction with Jesus' mother's approach

It was discussed in the previous chapter that women possess the ability to influence men, especially those accessible to them their sons and husbands. In the story of the wedding at Cana, it appears that Jesus' mother tried to influence her son on the basis of her family position, and that she was confident that Jesus would listen to her simply because she was his mother. Kruse perceives the same idea in the mother's request and estimates that her influence seems to be motivated by the blood relationship and/or parental authority (Kruse 2003:92). As seen before, this approach was not an effective tool for her to use to have her request met. Jesus challenged that influence and his mother had to adopt a new approach of going beyond the relationship based on blood ties. This new approach served as a key for Jesus' mother to involve the servants in the act of solving the problem. The same influence based on kinship is observed in Rwanda. In this section we will dialogue with the strategy of women's influence in order to examine the benefits and practicability of the new approach, adopted by the mother of Jesus, to traditional Rwandan society.

7.3.1.3 Women's influence on men in the Rwandan traditional society

The analysis in chapter four pointed out that Rwandan women, ordinary or royal, could have influence on the decision-making of their men, specifically their sons and husbands. Culturally this power was exhibited mainly by queen-mothers who ruled conjointly with their sons. In Rwandan history, the approach shown by Jesus' mother allowed queen-mothers and other close relatives to wield considerable influence over the kings, to the extent of dictating to the monarchs what to do. Sometimes their influence was constructive, and sometimes it could aggravate a situation instead of bringing a solution, with negative impacts felt by the entire population. Women's influence can be a source of peace or conflict in their communities.

The case of the renowned queen-mother Nyirarumanga provides an example of positive influence. She exercised her skills by introducing a culture which promoted a poetic genre called *Ibisigo by'impakanizi*. That particular kind of poem had the purpose of retelling and preserving the Rwandan history by praising the deeds of the kings and queen-mothers (Muzungu 2003:27). These poems, which sing the good works of men,

worked on men's mentality, sometimes by influencing them to change their ways of decision-making in certain areas of leadership. However, not all the women exercised a positive influence on their men. For instance the queen-mother Kanjogera's influence ended in the notorious *Coup d'Etat de Rucunshu* in which her step-son King Rutarindwa was assassinated together with many other people. Her influence on her brother motivated the conspiracy to eliminate the legitimate king and enthrone her biological son Yuhi-Musinga (Taylor 1999:179; Newbury 1988:58-59). "Kanjogera played a vital role as manager of the royal household, and was the focal point of all intrigue" (Melvern 2000:41). While such negative influence is not generalized to all women, cases such as Kanjogera can happen. Interacting with the new approach adopted by the mother of Jesus, we examine the influence of Rwandan women on men.

7.3.1.4 Rwandan women's influence in the light of Jesus' mother's new approach

It was discussed earlier that Rwandan women had opportunities to express their influence on men through cultural practices which were greatly respected and valued by every member of the society. Women could exercise that power to the point of changing the decisions of their sons or husbands. It was pointed out that a mother or a wife could stop her son or husband from being involved in a conflict by a cultural act of placing the traditional belt inside the gate (Bigirumwami 1984:43). This cultural influence of women on men is based on blood relationship; it fundamentally revolves around the family ties. However, as discussed earlier, this kind of influence does not reach the larger community; it is limited to a narrow range of people connected by blood ties. At the Cana wedding, Jesus' mother was discouraged from adopting such an approach. She did not resist the implied demand to change her approach; I assume that she understood Jesus' language about its ineffectiveness and she agreed to adopt a better one, which was to seek for a kind of influence that could reach not only her son but many other people. She went beyond the kinship ties and adopted an inclusive approach based on faith in Jesus. This new approach embraces a larger number of people than a limited community connected by blood ties and kinship.

At the cross, Jesus confirmed the kind of relationship which embraces people beyond family ties by entrusting his mother to the community of faith represented by the Beloved Disciple. But Jesus also entrusted the Beloved Disciple to the care of his mother. It is worth noticing Jesus' act at the cross; it places Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple on an equal footing. In other words, Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple play equal roles in the new community of faith. Jesus' act emphasizes equality of men and women in their responsibilities in the community of faith. Jesus' mother was entrusted not to her biological child, nor was the Beloved Disciple entrusted to his biological mother. They were given the same level of responsibility as they were asked to play the equal role of transcending the boundaries of gender and blood ties in order to meet the needs of a wider community.

Jesus also promoted equality in the role of peacemaking, by encouraging an approach motivated by the spirit of *ubumuntu,*[86] referred to as *ubuntu* in South African culture. This *ubumuntu* is a behaviour which is based on the common interest of the community rather than sectionalism. A woman who does not exhibit such a quality is blamed more than a man. Perhaps this is because, traditionally, a compassionate attitude is expected of women and is connected to the way the community views them; as those who give life, they must therefore exhibit a great deal of care for it. The mother of Jesus displayed that quality of *ubumuntu,* a quality whose influence goes beyond human ties of blood relationship, friendship, patronage, marriage, and others, as opposed to *ikimenyane* (bias based on acquaintances or connections motivated by regions, race, barriers, etc). An approach based on the *ikimenyane* kind of influence was proven inadequate, not only because of its limitation to a small group of people but also because of its discrimination based on favouritism and sectional interest.

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[86] *Ubumuntu* comes from the name *umuntu* which means a 'person' or a 'human being'. However, a human being or a person can be referred to as *igikoko*, animal, because of the lack of *ubumuntu* in him or her. *Ubumuntu* in Rwandan culture is a characteristic of a good or compassionate person who considers others from the view of a human-being, not an animal. Such a person is described as *umuntu*, a term which displays the quality opposed to animal or *igikoko*. Rwandans then used to say that a person is *umuntu* as a way of describing him/her as a compassionate person who does not discriminate against anybody because of his/her region, ethnicity, material things, religion etc. The term is also used to characterise somebody who is forgiving and does not keep grudges.

Considering the situation in the Rwandan community, influence based on *ubumuntu,* as adopted by Jesus' mother, is appropriate because of its inclusive nature. If Rwandan women choose to adopt such an approach rather than focusing on their families and own ethnic groups, they may be able to effectively address the tensions in their community resulting from the genocide and other civil conflicts in the society.

The Rwandan situation requires the kind of influence that Jesus' mother learnt at Cana; Jesus' address to her "separated him from his Mother's motherhood and any influence that she might still exercise in his life and ministry" (Waetjen 2005:117). When, at the foot of the cross (John 19:25-27), Jesus' mother was publicly and officially proclaimed the mother of a wider community, her influence was widened beyond the biological sphere. This new and better role was the result of instruction she received from Jesus of relating to him by means of faith.[87] From that perspective, even the waiters complied with her command which also prepared them to be part of the new community of faith. Their compliance to Jesus' command is the expression of their faith in him (John 2:5,7,8).

The members of the new community are characterized by being free from divisions based on biological and regional obligation. It is only from the view of that freedom that they can relate and connect to members of their communities without the obstacles of prejudice based on origin and race. Therefore, such people who prove readiness to be part of the community free of grudges caused by regional and kinship conflict can be successful in their peacemaking role. They can become instruments of unity in their communities. Considering the benefits of that approach, it is one that Rwandan women would be advised to adopt as a means to open a wider gate for the act of peacemaking in the country. It can offer women the opportunity to develop the quality of being *Nyampinga* that is expected of them. As it was seen that Rwandan women could not stop conflicts using cultural practices of peacemaking based on influencing their men,

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[87] The prologue speaks about faith, emphasizing its power to enlarge the community by making anyone who has that faith become a child of God. "Yet …to those who believe in his name he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). It means that faith destroys the limitations of biological ties in order to create a bigger family, in contrast to a nuclear family which revolves around blood ties.

husbands and sons because of its limitation. But the new approach of transcending human divisions adopted by Jesus' mother can be of use because of its great potential and power of being an inclusive method which goes beyond human divisions. The use of such a model can help the Rwandan women to prepare a better future for the nation because of its capacity to include a large community of people regardless of their social groups, regions, gender or any other human ties.

The next section interacts with the Samaritan woman's capacity to bridge the gap between Jesus, his disciples and the Judeans. It supplements Jesus' mother's strategies by exploring the role of a woman caught in the deadly conflict between two communities of people who claimed the same heritage.

7.3.2 The Samaritan woman's readiness for instruction, a way towards transcending blood-ties

It was earlier discussed that historically the education of girls and women had not been a priority for parents either in the Rwandan culture nor the Mediterranean world. Female education was poor compared to that of male children. Despite the fact that education was not as formal as it is in our current generation, even the few opportunities which may be described as informal were exclusive as they were only open to male children. That situation was similar to the first century Mediterranean world where education was at a very low level even for men. Even Jesus' disciples were reckoned to be "unschooled and ordinary men" (Acts 4:13). But that argument, singling out Jesus' disciples, cannot be generalized to mean there was a lack of any education for men. Instead it may fall under the observation that Jesus, coming from a peasant and lower class was also not educated. Thus, as Draper observes, his followers were predominantly peasant farmers, fishermen and small retainers such as tax collectors (Draper 2003:83). The lower educational standard of Jesus' disciples does not undermine the argument that there was a patriarchal bias against women since even such meagre training was offered only to male children; female children were excluded from it.

In Rwandan culture as well as in the Mediterranean world, any kind of female education was centred on domestic matters. In both societies, it was the duty of the mothers to train their daughters in these. Only a few cases in the Jewish society are noted whereby elite families could also involve their daughters in a particular kind of education under some rabbis (Lewis 2002:60; Levine 1991:229). Restriction on females' opportunities for education in both contexts created enormous obstacles for women and reduced their participation in society.

The Samaritan woman had not received any of the kind of training provided for men. But in following her dialogue with Jesus, we discovered that she had some detailed knowledge about her society. She was aware of the traditions which separated her ethnic group from the Judeans. But the author leaves a gap in narrating the story; he does not mention how the Samaritan woman received the information. We can assume that she received it from her community, a common channel through which information is passed from one person to the other. She was not an educated woman who could have acquired her knowledge from a formal and specific school.

Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman engaged her in a process of learning a new truth, changing the way she dealt with her community and her view of everything related to the ethnic barriers between Judeans and Samaritans. She discovered that in fact Jewish[88] people were not such evil people as they were portrayed in her community. Jesus, who did not discriminate against[89] this woman, accepted to teach her things that challenged what she had previously believed to be true. By spending time in dialogue with Jesus, she learnt from him, and later on became his follower (John 4:28-32, 39-41). The training of this woman by Jesus, resulting in her transcending her prejudices, is

[88] In this analysis, the Samaritan woman uses the term Jews referring to Jesus as one of the population of the broader region which also embraces Galileans. In this story, Jesus is referred to as a Jew (John 4:9b). "For the Jews do not associate with Samaritans" (verse 9). But in the story of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, Jesus is identified as Galilean by the Judeans who wanted to stone him in Judea. The term 'Jews' in John 11 is exclusive, unlike John 4:9. More details on the term Judean are provided above, under the relationship of Jesus and the Judeans.
[89] The previous chapter provides details on how Jesus respected this woman and understood her status as an abused woman. His attitude to her restored her dignity in her community, demonstrated by their responding to her request to be involved in the relationship with (the Jew) Jesus and his disciples.

interpreted simply by some as a response to her sexual indiscretion and shamelessness. But as we have seen, this interpretation reflects a male patriarchal perspective. And as long as a patriarchal biased view of women is maintained in a community, it is impossible to speak about women's involvement in it; the door for women's participation is closed.

There is therefore, a need to change the patriarchal bias towards the condition of women. It was seen that Jesus' inclusive capability of treating the Samaritan woman with dignity – equal to that of a man - changed the way she perceived the situation between her community and the Judeans. She understood that her people were not superior, no matter their origin or their place of worship. The time she spent with Jesus clarified to her that no one is better than the other because of his/her historical background. Jesus' teaching based on the principles of 'neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem' challenged her feelings of superiority. Jesus' teachings emphasized a community which is not bound by historical and traditional conflict, but bound by the spirit and the truth (John 4:21, 24). In other words, the members of the new community are identified on the basis of God's spirit and truth, not on the myths of their origin, region, gender and religion. After that dialogue, the Samaritan woman was able to accommodate people from a different tribe and region, and she was able to involve her community in the same act by the invitation "come and see…" This is a challenge for anyone who wants to be part of peace and reconciliation. In the same way, those involved in peacemaking roles need to understand the principle Jesus is emphasizing - the transcendence of human ties that create conflict in the community. There is a need to understand that there is no one race, one ethnic group, one gender and so on that is superior. The Samaritan woman's exposure to Jesus' teaching enabled her to perceive another view, and made her an instrument of peace by breaking the walls of division in her community.

 The Samaritan woman's boldness and readiness to learn new truths is commendable. We have seen how, at first, she was reticent to speak to Jesus because of the prejudices of her society. But after the exposure to new teaching of equality and inclusive of diversities she was able to respond to Jesus' initiative and her former prejudices were challenged. The

new instruction not only benefited her by restoring her dignity as a person, but also corrected her so that her previous mindset changed; she overcame the prejudices of her tribe and society. From there she demonstrated her transcendence of biased judgments based on kinship and blood ties and she related to Jesus in a new way.

In her new status as a "learned woman" in Jesus' school the Samaritan woman began to work as bridge-builder between the two groups and re-established the broken relationship between her people and the Judeans. She left her water pot and strove to destroy the walls of divisions between her people and the Jews by the invitation to her town's people: Δεῦτε, ἴδετε (verse 29); she took the initiative of involving her people in the renewal of their minds toward the Judean people. Her readiness to be transformed had positive fruits which expanded into her community. "She invites her fellow Samaritans to return with her to the place of her encounter with Jesus, *the Jew*" (Waetjen 2005:176). People of her town accepted the invitation of the woman and came to see. Upon that inviation they heard Jesus' teachings and their previous view of being true worshipers based on Mount Gerizim was challenged; they discovered that the place of worship or their myths of origin could not make them superior. They understood that true worshipers are neither on that mountain nor in Jerusalem. The result of their response to the woman's initiative was that her townspeople had a similar experience: they were also able to overcome their prejudices and to interact with Jesus as well. The broken relationship between the two groups was restored and the Samaritans pleaded with Jesus and his disciples to stay in their town. The narrator reports that, "Jesus stayed there two days. And many Samaritans believed because of the testimony of the woman and because of Jesus' word" (verses 40-41). The dialogue which begun with an exclusive note: "Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9), ends with an indication of a restored relationship, through their inclusive fellowship (John 4:40-41). Because of her testimony and her example, walls of prejudice and hatred between the two groups were broken.

A good relationship was established and their association was demonstrated by staying together in a fellowship of two days. The Samaritan woman became a bridge-builder between her community and Jesus and his disciples. Both she and her community were

no longer looking at Jesus and his disciples through the eyes of ethnic barriers, that is, as Samaritans versus Jews, but they had caught the vision of a new community, free of kinship and blood-ties.

This discussion about the Samaritan woman's instruction by Jesus demonstrates the importance of women's education. When women have an opportunity for instruction and are freed from being discriminated against and abused, they prove their readiness to learn and can use the acquired knowledge for the benefit of their communities, just as effectively as men.

7.3.2.1 The Samaritan woman's transcendence of barriers, a mirror to Rwandan women

As discussed before, Rwandan women are not trained at the same level as men, despite the efforts of the government to improve the situation. However, despite their lack of, or low, education, they are informed about the divisive issues in their communities. They also have information about their society concerning their ethnic groups and kinship, and other barriers in the community. Such information has an impact on their relationships; in other words, they are also part of the problem in one way or the other. The interaction with the Samaritan woman's experiences, experiences that enabled her to transcend the barriers of kinship and blood-ties, offers a new perspective to Rwandan women.

Chapter four provided detail about the conflict between the Rwandan social groups. It was pointed out that conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi groups is based mainly on disputes about their myths of origin, especially the problematic Hamitic hypothesis which emphasizes the superiority of Tutsis and the inferiority of Hutus. Hypotheses such as these, promoted by some colonizers, have shaped much of the history of the country. "What has been said about ethnic and social relations in the pre-colonial and colonial periods continuously fuelled bitterness, mistrust and conflict between the Hutu and the Tutsi (Nyirimana 2010:138). The Hamitic theory places the origin of Tutsis outside of Africa, while it considers the Hutus as African Bantu who are inferior even in thinking.

Ethnic classification and propaganda about these myths of origin[90] played a serious role in the killing of Tutsis during the genocide. Because of these kinds of theories that emphasise differences of origin and create feelings of superiority and inferiority in these two groups - both in their ways of living and thinking - there have been continual conflicts between them. The interaction with the story of the Samaritan woman has pointed out a similar situation of conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews based on their origin. Jews viewed themselves as superior to the Samaritans. Jews considered Samaritans to be a diluted race because of their intermarriage with Gentiles - a defiled race whose women were unclean, thus rendering their men unclean.

Another point of similarity is observed in the way information is acquired. It was pointed out that before meeting Jesus at the well, the Samaritan woman was aware of the issues that separated her group from the Judeans. Rwandan women are also aware of the social issues in their community, particularly after the genocide. The reality is that Rwandan people, both in the country or outside the country, know the prejudices between the two groups. For instance, today, some Hutu perceive Tutsi as *inzoka* (snakes), those who can never be trusted because of their supposed hidden malice and deceit. On the other hand, some Tutsi perceive Hutu as *abicanyi* (executioners), brutal, a race without aptitude and manners. However, these stereotypes and insults which one group uses to damage the face of the other, leading to their refusal to associate with each other, are not acquired in schools. They are acquired through families and through the exchanges of everyday conversation within a given social-group or kin relationship. The process of transmission is done orally from adults to the younger ones and between peers within the same social group until it becomes part of their lives. In other words, not all the information is necessarily the product of formal training or education received from schools. Instruction can be provided in different ways.

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[90] Basing his view on the Hamitic theory which says that Tutsis are not part of the Bantu race, one influential person broadcasted on the Rwandan radio claiming that Tutsis should return back home to Ethiopia using the shortcut. The shortcut proposed by that person was known by the killers as the route through the Rwandan rivers such as the Nyabarongo and others. The statement was suggesting that Tutsis be forced into those rivers. That statement was welcomed by the killers and many Tutsis were killed and thrown into the rivers.

Pointing to one example of this kind of transmission, I refer to an incident that happened one day during the commemoration of the Rwandan genocide at a particular university a few years ago. That day, a person approached a group of Rwandan women and urged them to keep reminding their children of what the Hutus did during the genocide so that the acts will never be forgotten in Rwandan society. This was a private exhortation to a group of people; it was not an official talk. Although it is important not to forget the past, this suggested way of giving such information to children is one of the ways of passing negative instruction onto them. The result of this kind of instruction is that endless barriers of hatred and hostility continue to be built. Preparing a nation free from that kind of hostility and division requires imparting positive instruction to the children by emphasizing forgiveness and love; by so doing the teacher, and the children, become promoters of peace. As I have indicated previously, this is an emphasis of the contextual biblical approach which is guiding this work.

There is the need then for positive education for women, so that they are able to challenge wrong information acquired from their families or community. The Samaritan woman's readiness for change can challenge Rwandan women to break down the walls separating their social groups or regions and to discover that not all the members of a different group are irredeemably evil. The example of the Samaritan woman and the mother of Jesus above are convincing; if women have the opportunity to be exposed to the right instruction, - instruction that emphasizes inclusiveness of diversity, forgiveness, justice and any other positive element in the domain of creating and maintaining peace, they can change the society. The positive instruction that the Samaritan woman received from Jesus transformed her way of seeing those from different social groups. It created in her the capability of transcending the walls of division based on blood ties and region. The good news is that this kind of instruction does not require a formal education, which means that even the large number of peasant women in Rwanda can receive such instruction. Effective training can be done by the church, using structures which are already in place. For instance, using the Community Bible Study[91] method to focus on

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[91] Bible Studies are beyond the scope of this research work but the exegesis of the selected biblical texts has awakened my awareness and interest in planning Bible studies. One of my objectives (a long or short

the regional and racial issues can be a tool to raise awareness of the role of women in peacemaking and reconciliation. Rwanda's official commemoration of the genocide in the month of April[92] may provide an important atmosphere for that theme of peace and forgiveness. In some churches, the Mothers' Union, Girls' Brigade and other women's associations may be a channel through which Community Bible Studies for men and women could be implemented in the church. With this help, the church can reach a large number of people in their community. The selected texts in the Gospel of John studied in this thesis, dealing with the role of women in reconciliation, can play an important role in transforming people's consciousness.

Bible studies help to explore various ways of facilitating reconciliation. For example, the story of Jesus' mother can open discussion on ways of preventing conflict in the community. The text dealing with the Samaritan woman, together with the one on the two sisters of Bethany, Mary and Martha, can raise awareness on transcending ethnic barriers and regionalism. Bible study on the text dealing with the woman gatekeeper may provide a good example of how to evaluate one's attitude toward a different ethnic group or region and to avoid the act of pointing a finger at those from different regions or tribes. The Contextual Bible Study method, used in the work of the Ujamaa centre at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, has proven to be very effective in grappling with issues of social justice, healing, conflict and reconciliation.[93]

However, importantly, before its implementation, the success of this plan in the church requires a leadership that has also transcended these barriers of ethnicity and blood ties, as well as gender barriers, in order to be good examples for the congregation. A church

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term plan depending on my community and the possibility) is to start organizing Bible studies among Rwandan women. However, this may start with a mixture of both Rwandans and non-Rwandans, depending on the open doors, until the time I will be able to reach the Rwandan community.

[92] April is the official month for commemorating the genocide in Rwanda. This period can be used by the church to transform the consciousness of the population, starting with women.

[93] The Contextual Bible Study is used by the Ujamaa centre based at University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is one of the most effective means to reach people in different communities. See, for example, West (1991, 1993). Although its first concern may be HIV and AIDS, it can be helpful to introduce it for other purposes.

My deep wish is to be able to introduce these tools in my community as soon as I can in order to reach as many members of it as possible, even though this will be after the completion of this thesis. It will then be the way the new insights can be applied with the community.

which reflects these qualities may serve as a mirror to the political sector, challenging and directing its orientation towards effective work for reconciliation in the population. In other words, the inclusive church which accommodates both groups equally, visibly lives out their transcendence of walls of division. It emphasizes equality and the love of the enemy, which is one way of promoting the message of transformation amongst their members.

This role however, was not displayed very well by the church, as pointed out before, for various reasons. The common weakness, not unique to Rwandan society, is siding with the leadership and failing to challenge it. The church failed to help prevent the genocide, and once it finally broke out it was beyond the reach of anyone to stop it. In fact some church buildings were the sites of massacres and some church leaders are alleged to have cooperated with the killers. The church needs to overcome the failures of the past and to build a community which transcends kinship ties. This will also help the church to reach the objectives of training the congregation in peacemaking based on faith and *ubumuntu* in their communities. It is from that perspective that church members can spread instruction on the transcendence of prejudices based on kinship and regionalism, and other human ties which contribute to divisions in their community.

Since women bring forth life and they carry much of the responsibility for maintaining it (Reardon 1993:23), it should be fundamental for them also to protect life. The protection begins by preventing or overcoming conflict in their society. By being willing to learn from Jesus and the Samaritan woman's transcendence of barriers, Rwandan women, from both Hutu and Tutsi groups, may exhibit their readiness to carry on their role of peacemaking and reconciliation in their respective social groups and families.

The next section aims to show that the two sisters of Bethany displayed the same ability to overcome barriers based on region and blood ties by associating with the Galilean Jesus and his disciples. The section proceeds by discussing how Mary went even further to publicly support and associate with the rejected Jesus at a dinner in front of the Judeans who were his foes. The interaction with the sacrificial acts of these two women

could inspire Rwandan women in the challenging role of openly associating with the victims in our society.

7.3.3 Mary and Martha's transcendence of kinship and regional barriers, a challenge to Rwandan women

It was observed in the analysis of the text (John 11:1-54) that the relationship between Jesus and the Judeans was not smooth. However, the narrator leaves a narrative gap for the cause of that unfriendly atmosphere between them. By looking into the relationship between the two groups, our interpretation filled that gap by suggesting regional and ethnic differences as the major causes of their conflict. But the high priests and Pharisees masked these differences with political (John 11:48b) and religious issues, which were more easily understood by ordinary people who wanted to associate with Jesus because of his miracles and teachings. While the outsiders referred to the whole population of Palestine as Judeans, insiders made regional and ethnic distinctions. Judeans were referred to as people from Judea, the Samaritans were from the southern part of Palestine, Galileans were from the northern part of Palestine, and Pereans were from Perea east of the Jordan. They were all very aware of their distinct geographic and ethnic origins even though they shared a common heritage to a greater or less extent (Yamaguchi 2002:5-6). In John's view, they all belonged together in a restored Israel in the eschatological age brought by Jesus.

Looking at this regional conflict in the light of the Rwandan views may help to comprehend the regional conflict in the population; because despite its small size, Rwanda has some points of similarity regarding the regional conflicts between the Judeans and the Samaritans. Besides the ethnic problems, Rwandans also experienced the regional barriers, the source of major problems among the population. The regional conflict was based on two major geographical areas in the country, the south and the north, Kiga and Nduga regions respectively. During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, Rwanda was led by Tutsi kings, *Umwami*. However, that regime was not accepted by the entire Rwandan community. Melvern comments that the manifestation of discontent with the harsh regime led many people to flee to neighbouring Uganda (Melvern 2000:10).

But apparently the regional problem started during that monarchic regime whereby the region of Nyanza in the south, which was the residence of the king and the 'capital' of the country, was considered superior. When the monarchic regime was replaced by the democratic regime in 1962, the region of Gitarama in the south, Nduga, was favoured as the native place of President Grégore Kayibanda. The regionalism issue was obvious to Rwandans: "There was a time when half of the members of the government originated from two districts among 149 that made up the whole country" (Nyirimana 2010:281)

During that time, the southern region was given attention especially in the domain of education. Later on the regional problem became an excuse and President Kayibanda was ousted on 5 July 1973 by a coup organized by one of his officers from the northern Kiga region, Major General Habyarimana. Unfortunately, during the time of the leadership of Habyarimana, the regional conflict became even more open and violent than before. The two regions were openly opposed so that even the ordinary people were aware of the regionalism issue of the north and the south. As the northern region was favoured in various ways, such as getting good jobs etc., people originating from other regions were trying to disguise themselves so as to appear as northerners, even trying to imitate their accent.

Regionalism was one of the factors which prompted the genocide. The extermination of a number of people started before the death of the president, prompted by the killing of some politicians in the southern region of the country. During the time of war when people fled the country, northerners were not safe to pass through the southern region and vice versa. Even in the refugee camps, northerners and southerners did not feel secure among each other. Such hostility is felt even today in some areas of the country and outside Rwanda. Sometimes the regional conflict is stronger than the conflict based on ethnic groups. It is even worse when people have to suffer a double 'crime': that of being born in a given geographical area and from a given ethnic group. Rwandan women however, sometimes display the attitude of the woman gate-keeper in John 18:15-17; they side with their people when dealing with regional conflicts, at the expense of the victims.

The behaviour of the Judean women is in fact a challenge to Rwandan women. In other words, one may submit that the Rwandan conflict mirrors the Judean situation during Jesus' time, especially his relationship as a Galilean outsider with the Judean insiders. These two groups were divided by regional and kinship conflicts so Jesus and his disciples were not secure in Judea. When the conflict reached its peak, Jesus no longer moved publicly among the Judeans (11:54). Even Judeans who were in a position of influencing other Judeans, like Lazarus, were not secure in their own community; Lazarus was later hunted like Jesus (12:11-12). Hence against this background, Rwandan readers appreciate the role and attitude of these Judean women better than those who have never experienced such problems. In fact, in the case of Rwanda, it was hard for Hutus to side openly with the victims during the Rwandan genocide as it could cost his/her own life, even the life of the whole family. It may also be hard today for a Tutsi to side with a Hutu openly in the aftermath of the genocide when the latter are 'victims'. The public role of Mary and Martha and the risk they took is therefore very well understood by Rwandans, and any others who have experienced the same situation.

It is not easy to side with the victims in the midst of conflicts, especially when they were persecuted by those from one's own ethnic groups or those coming from the same region. Despite the cultural role of peacemaking that might be expected from those tied to different ethnic groups by intermarriage, they were more often victims than peacemakers (see the details in chapter four). Siding with the victim in such conditions is not easy and it exposes one's life to the same fate as the victim. But the boldness of these two sisters of Bethany and Mary's sacrificial act at the dinner may provide a helpful strategy to Rwandan women in their role of peacemaking.

7.3.3.1 Mary's public act of siding with the victim and what Rwandan women can learn

It was observed that the narrator did not explain Mary's act of anointing Jesus at the beginning of the story (11:2). As discussed before, this narrative gap is proleptic; it was only after Lazarus' resurrection that the narrator clarifies Mary's act in chapter 12:2. He gives the account of how the resurrection of Lazarus prompted Judeans to try to kill Jesus

and how openly and publicly Mary demonstrated her transcendence of the hostility of her kin to support the condemned Jesus. She did it at a dinner, which was offered in Jesus' honour. Mary's act of pouring expensive oil on Jesus' feet and wiping it with her precious hair was extremely dangerous for her life and reputation. Her act could clearly demonstrate that she sides with the enemy, somebody who is not on good terms with her people. But she publicly demonstrated that she could support Jesus despite the tradition and the presence of his foes. Waetjen believes that these siblings were recognized figures of importance in Jerusalem because of the presence of the ruling authorities at Lazarus' death and resurrection (Waetjen 2005:387). It is then possible that Mary acted in the presence of many Judeans from Jerusalem including some authorities. As a woman doing such an act to a man in public, a man she was not related to, she risked spoiling her reputation and dignity in the whole region of Judea. Mary chose to do such a sacrificial act of laying down her honour and reputation. She was determined to support Jesus and side with him during the difficult time of rejection.

From the same perspective, during the Rwandan tragedy, despite the high risk to their lives, some women were able to play such role in their own way. Even though an enormous number of people were killed, the fact that some survived shows that there were those who took the risk to side with the victims. Indeed, many who tried to openly side with the victims were killed, but there are others who were able to protect the victims secretly or in some other ways and still survive. I remember in the family with whom I was staying during the genocide, there were more than ten people hiding and the brother of the husband who was *interahamwe* was suspicious. He came many times to check, sometimes causing problems, trying to force himself into the rooms while shouting[94] that he knew that there are 'enemies' hidden in the house. He would come with his friends sometimes, with the threat of forcing themselves into the rooms, but surprisingly no one was killed. When the husband of that family died (because of natural

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[94] I use the term shouting because speaking in a loud voice and saying that there were *inkotanyi* or *inyenzi* (the names which were identifying Tutsi during that time) in somebody's house was like killing that whole family. Such noise would alert the neighbourhood who would also inform the killers about the whereabouts of the victims (or enemy in that context). In that situation, a family who offered a hiding place to the enemies was regarded as one of them because of their choice to side with the victims/enemy. This man was shouting intentionally so that those who were hiding might be afraid and come out, or the hosting family might decide to take them out for his/her safety or the safety of his/her family.

causes during the genocide), it was the wife who played the noble role of standing between those who were in hiding and her brother-in-law and his colleagues. This woman risked her life and that of her children by siding with the victims as Mary and Martha did. She risked her life by overlooking the threat of her brother-in law-who was not very concerned with her life. However, not all the women in the Gospel of John displayed that virtue of siding with the victim. The woman gate-keeper demonstrated an opposite aspect.

7.3.4 The woman gate-keeper's finger-pointing to a victim: a negative mirror for Rwandan women

The woman gate-keeper in John 18:17 saw Peter and identified him as a stranger. It worth to note that this text which deals with this woman is not anywhere near as substantial as the other selected texts above; it is only made of few verses (18:15-18). It does not play a major role in the narrative. However, from the view of the peacemaking perspective of this work, the woman gate-keeper is a also a major character because of her negative intervention which had consequences for Peter. It provides my narrative reading with a narrative gap pregnant with meaning. Who is the woman, what is her motivation, why did she tell others: the text is silent and draws me in to the world of the text and its possibilities. The reading of these few verses brought out the invisible to be visible as pointed out by a feminist reading of texts (Rakoczy 2004). Moreover, as Draper argues "Our context prompts us in the questions we bring to the text and decides what counts as an answer" (Draper 2001:53). This perspective defined my choice of the text regardless of whether or not the historical "real author" intended it or not—we will in any case never know. West clarifies that "Our contexts prompts us through our ideological commitments to them and through their ideological formation of us…Our sacred text also prompts us (West 2009: 254). In other words, my social context as a Rwandan woman who experienced the socio-conflict which led to the tragedy of the genocide, prompted my ideological orientation towards the choice of this text – despite its brevity – in which a woman played a negative role in a conflict.

Moreover, the choice of the Method of analysing this text gives space to the text to speak and allows the Rwandan context to speak back, and vice versa, because it is a dialogue between the two. The analysis of the Rwandan context revealed that not all the Rwandan women were innocent during the genocide. Even though they were not pursuers of the victims, those whose fingers were pointed to the victims confirm that they did not side with them; such an act classified those women among the pursuers of the victims. The analysis of the text dealing with the woman at the gate and her questions to Peter, who was a follower of the victim Jesus, was seen as troublesome to Peter, who immediately denied knowing Jesus. Later on, the same question came back to Peter now from the pursuers of Jesus (verses 25 and 26).

The woman gate-keeper failed to meet the Rwandan adage *umukobwa ni nyampinga:* 'a woman is a potential source of rescue in situation of need without discrimination'.
This woman's act displays the kind of negative attitude of some Rwandan women during and after the genocide, as seen in chapter four. A question like the one posed to Peter could kill someone during the Rwandan genocide. For anyone, regardless of age or position, to point a finger at a person and identify him or her as a Tutsi in front of the rebels was a deadly accusation. The rebels would kill the person without any discussion. The question of this gate-keeper then is very well understood by Rwandans whether Hutus or Tutsis, during or after the genocide; it determines one's fate even today

The act of the woman gate-keeper then though it appears to come from the invisible –the account of a girl at the gate in two verses- is to be read with consciousness by the agents of peace during the time of conflict; definitely her attitude is to be avoided by the agents of peace.

Indeed the narrator does not give the full picture of what caused this woman to identify Peter as coming from a different region and kin. Her question, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?"(Verse 17) appears to be a rhetorical question to which she already had an answer. Peter's accent and appearance might have betrayed him as being associated with Jesus; he was perceived to be a Galilean. The woman noticed that he was

associated with Jesus even before Peter could speak. Being associated with Jesus during that time was a crime. Even if this woman's intention was not as bad as Peter thought, her question was harmful because it could expose his identity, which he tried to hide for his safety. To ask Peter that question in such circumstances could have been tantamount to a death sentence, but he somehow evaded further attention.

Peter's situation mirrors that of the Rwandan Tutsis during the genocide or the Hutus in the aftermath of the genocide. In cases of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda, one's identity can determine whether one will live or die. Thus, to identify somebody in that manner in front of people, especially those of a different ethnic group, could lead to a death sentence. For instance, if a person was asked about his/her ethnic group when they were trying to pass without being noticed, it was no longer possible. Such questions could attract the attention of those who were not interested in him or her before, and it was not easy to leave that place safely. This happened to me when I was obliged to go out one day during the genocide and had to pass a roadblock. The same remark as that of the gate-keeper made by one person at the roadblock was almost enough for me to be killed; I cannot explain how I survived that day but it was the last day I would go out during the remaining period of the genocide. So in Peter's situation, the woman's remark rendered him vulnerable to anybody who wished to indict him for complicity with the accused Jesus.

The tools for perpetrating the Rwandan genocide were not necessarily machetes, guns or other visible devices. A finger pointed at somebody was also a tool for his/her execution. Unfortunately, some women were counted among the killers by the means of that tool. Some, because of fear for their own lives, easily succumbed to the killers' pressure and pointed a finger at victims, even those in their own houses. Other women ignored their cultural role as peacemakers when it concerned people from different ethnic groups or regions. In front of the killers, these women could ask the gate-keeper's question: "You are not a Tutsi, are you? Where do you come from?" just to attract the killers' attention to that person. They informed the bands of killers where the Tutsi were hiding (Strauss 2006:100). Besides the ordinary women who pointed their fingers, some who held

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leadership positions during the genocide reportedly did the same. Examples include: Minister Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, Odette Nyirabagenzi, Rose Karushara and Euphrasy Kamatamu who are alleged to have been personally responsible for the deaths of thousands of people (African Rights 1995:2-3).

Lack of boldness to side with the victim was not only the case during the genocide. As argued above, even today some women fail to side with the vulnerable. After the genocide, Hutu people in turn became victims just as they had been the ones responsible for perpetuating the genocide. Thus, being a Hutu in the aftermath of the genocide (which is seen as being *Interahamwe)* is also a 'crime' - as it was for being Tutsi during the genocide. It is difficult or almost impossible for the Hutus today to prove their innocence. To side with them openly requires boldness, especially when a Hutu is in court, whether traditional court, *Gacaca,* or any other official court. For their own safety, many people avoid appearing in such places since speaking the truth could lead to jail or other sanctions. Some Tutsi women behave like Hutu women did during the genocide. They avoid associating with Hutus because the latter are alleged to be criminals. Instead of being their *nyampinga* in such times of need, sometimes Tutsi women point fingers at them, accusing the Hutu women of killing or looting during the genocide. Or if they have not killed, regardless of their capability, the allegation that they did not help a specific person during the genocide is a seen as a valid reason to make certain that 's/he gets what s/he deserves'. Hence, like that of the woman gate-keeper, any finger-pointing that asks 'You are a Hutu, are you not?' may be just as much as a sign of betrayal as it was during the genocide.

This short overview of Rwandan women's failure to side with the victims of the other group, based on ethnic and regional conflicts, is a challenge for women of both social groups. The attitude of the woman gate-keeper towards Peter may help Rwandan women to evaluate their behaviour towards those in danger. At the same time, her act may open their eyes so that when they read the story of the raising of Lazarus, and Mary's act following it in particular, they may appreciate the role of these Judeans women toward the Galilean Jesus. Their brave transcendence of regional and blood ties provides a

challenge to Rwandan women who may feel the burden for a true and lasting reconciliation.

CHAPTER 8. GENERAL CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

8.0 Overview of the main points

This chapter discusses the findings of the study by highlighting the most important points in the chapters that compose the research. It provides the summary of the main steps taken, and contains a brief overview of the major theological views of this work, especially those found in the analysed texts.

The aim of the research was to approach the Bible from the context of conflict resolution in order to encourage women to learn how to go beyond culture to become agents of peace and reconciliation. I sought to find an approach to conflict resolution that is contextual, based in the community, and biblical, based on biblical principles of dealing with conflict. This background stimulated my choice of a narrative reading of some biblical texts which deal with women's role in conflict resolution.

After the brief discussion on the background and motivation of the work, the theoretical framework and the methodology which was to guide the research were determined. This work has consisted of contextual research which brought women from two different contexts, the Rwandan context and the context of the Fourth Gospel, into dialogue. Its contextual theoretical framework was determined by the Tri-polar Exegetical Model advanced by Patte and Grenholm (2000) and developed by Draper (2001). Additionally, some insights from the inculturation interpretive approach provided by Ukpong (1995) worked closely with the Tri-polar Model, especially during the study of the Rwandan context, the phase identified as contextualization. The contextualization phase provided a socio-historical and cultural background of Rwanda, focusing on Rwandan women's condition and plight. This provided important information concerning their roles in contributing to peacemaking and peace-building.

Before discussing the Rwandan context, it was necessary to investigate a number of theories of conflict resolution in order to find an approach which would be appropriate to guide the research. Being aware that the Rwandan conflict left deep wounds in the

population, it was important to determine an approach which would be fitting and able, in the context of the conflict, to address such wounds for true reconciliation. Moreover, the current research work is exegetical in nature; it deals with analysis of 'sacred' texts of faith. These two elements were used to determine a model of conflict resolution which would guide the research effectively. After considering the nature of the conflict, which is based in the community, and the analysis of the biblical texts, I chose to use an eclectic theoretical approach. I identified this as the 'contextual and biblical approach to conflict resolution'.

This research endeavoured to answer some questions raised in my mind by the civil conflict and the tragedy of genocide in Rwanda as argued earlier. The questions were based mainly on two major aspects: my awareness of the peacemaking role of women in Rwandan culture, expressed in sayings and adages, and our history of Christianity. It is claimed that Rwanda is a Christian country and yet this did not stop the carnage of the genocide nor the murderous reprisals afterwards. The attempt to get answers to this question instigated the research of this kind.

After providing the framework and the methodology guiding this thesis in chapter two, I undertook to address the major issues which are the focus of the work - the acts of peacemaking and reconciliation. Chapter three concentrated on the investigation of a theory of conflict resolution which would be fitting for this study. Following investigation into the strengths and weaknesses of some of these theories, I resolved to adopt a new model which combines conflict theory and a narrative biblical approach. However, although this combination added the weight to the approach, I noticed that another approach was needed for the strength and good results of this research. I then incorporated some aspects of the feminist approach. This research begun with a note clarifying that, because of the nature of the research, even though the feminist theories would not be included directly, some feminist views would be included to some extent. Thus, the incorporation of some aspects of feminist approach helped me to read the text with the eyes of feminist liberation. As it is reported by West, this reading enabled me to 'move behind the text to a historical reconstruction of the context from which the text

emerged'. West asserts that this move 'is essential because the patriarchal texts do not mirror the historical and social context from which they came but offer a selective and perspectival picture of the early Christian communities'. By this historical reconstruction 'women can move beyond the silences and backlashes against women found in the in the Bible' (West 1995:113). The feminist analysis stressed the view of the full humanity of women focusing on their dignity in the patriarchal societies. The combination of these approaches, the theories of conflict, Biblical approach and feminist reading of the texts, contributed to make this work a balanced research with social, biblical and feminist aspects. This will be an important pointer to future research on crises such as that in Rwanda which produced the genocide. Critical evaluations of the causes of the genocide cannot exclude a feminist critique of the contribution of the suppression of the voices of women as an aspect of unfolding political crises. Such a feminist critique can assist in both the distantiation and contextualization phases of the tri-polar framework. Feminist (and Postcolonialist) critiques of John's Gospel can contribute to the dialogue initiated by the engaged reader with a feminist critique of the Rwandan crisis.

Chapter four explored the Rwandan context with the aim of presenting some of the major issues which either promoted or hindered the role of women in dealing with conflict. It was noted that traditional and cultural practices through which women played an important peacemaking role were altered by the arrival of colonizers and Christian missionaries who viewed the cultural practices as demonic. Even after independence, their participation remained narrow as their education was limited. The arrival of colonizers and missionaries did not much challenge the patriarchal mentality of the Rwandan society.

In terms of the transforming message, it was noticed that apparently the missionaries did not have enough time to prepare the population for the new faith; this resulted in a religion that did not take deep root in Rwandan soil among the indigenous. While it promised new life, it denigrated Rwandan culture and for some people Christianity was considered as a lifestyle by which to gain social privileges from the colonizers. Kalengeyo may be correct in his argument : "This approach has not succeeded anywhere

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– for cultural practices are part of people's identity and to bid any group of people to abandon their culture is tantamount to asking the society in question to do their impossible - basically to deny and renounce their identity" (Kalengeyo 2006:303). As a result, some of the people continued with their traditional religion while following the new religion. This was one of the obstacles to the ability of the transforming message of the gospel being to affect the people.

The study proceeded by examining the context of the Fourth Gospel in the broad Mediterranean region of the first century. The aim was to highlight some of the major points of similarity and difference between that context and the Rwandan context in terms of the plight and condition and role of women, their contribution towards development and the peacemaking role in their communities. The findings here were very similar to those pertaining to the restrictive conditions of Rwandan women and the views of society toward them.

Chapter six was based on the study of the selected texts in the Fourth Gospel. This analysis of the texts highlighted the virtues of each of the characters who could serve as an inspiration to the Rwandan women in dealing with situations of crisis in their communities. Moreover, the study in that chapter revealed some issues that were similar in terms of the foundations of conflict in the two contexts. These relate to beliefs about the origins of the Rwandan social groups, and resulted in conflict around ethnicity and regional differences. The same issues were observed with beliefs about the origins of the Samaritans from the view of Judeans, and the regional and ethnic problems between Galileans (Jesus and his disciples) and Judeans (Judean elite of Jerusalem) as a consequence.

The interaction with the women in the selected texts served as mirror to Rwandan women to examine their attitude during the conflict. Some recommendations were made to Rwandan women especially in the chapter of appropriation and to what the Rwandan people, the Church and the government may be required to do in order to improve and prepare for a better future of the country. The church can participate in the re-education

of Rwandan society, since congregations from various denominations are found in every corner of the country. The Contextual Bible Studies of the kind advocated by Gerald West (1991, 1993), may be facilitated by women in the existing structures of some churches, and could serve as a tool to involve a good part of the Rwandan population in such process.

This approach of involving the church is an effective tool to reach a wider community. The right teachings which can be provided by the church can transform the mindset of divisions in the population to a new understanding of belonging to a new community united by love and new truth.[95] By emphasizing these teachings which promote love and equality among the population, the church will be able to produce people who are viewed as agents of true reconciliation in their communities. To achieve this goal, the church needs to understand that its responsibility is to condemn inequality and discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and regionalism.

8.1 In conclusion: directions for further research:

The current research briefly introduced some aspects of practical application of the findings. It suggests that a further empirical research should test the effectiveness of community Bible studies (or Contextual Bible Studies)[96] conducted among Rwandan women - and others depending on the objectives of the research - in churches, based on the selected texts analysed by this work. Even though the Bible studies could be conducted at any time in the country, this work suggests they be conducted in April during the period of *icyunamo*,- the month for the official commemoration of the genocide of in Rwandan. This study also suggests the theme of reconciliation with the aim of healing broken hearts. Teaching transcendence of divisions, as was done by Jesus in the selected texts, can be emphasized. This kind of Bible study can serve as a tool for

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[95] This can be the result of the teachings of Jesus to the Samaritan woman that, 'the time has come when the true worshipers will worship God in spirit and truth' (Jn 4:23). This emphasizes that those worshiping God are not divided by family, regional ties or myths of origins because God is spirit and does not belong to any particular group or region. The emphasis of the church then on the true and right teachings pointing to a new community which is free of these human ties can promote unity and restore good relations among the population.
[96] Both terms are used to describe the kind of contextual community readings suggested by the work of Gerald West.

the practical application of the findings of this work, with the ultimate aim of involving the Rwandan population in a biblical approach to peacemaking and reconciliation.

While the parameters of this study were defined in terms of research with women, this study suggests a further area for research that could undertake comparative exegesis of the role or absence of the role of men in the peacemaking in the Gospel of John. The limitation of the study to women's role was strategic and cultural in this research work, but it calls for a comparable study of the role of the men in the domain of peace and reconciliation as well. The role of the Beloved Disciple who was entrusted the care for Jesus' mother can be explored from this perspective.

Apart from the above findings and recommendation for their practicality in the community, this research work has also provided some new insights to the scholarship in the interpretation of the biblical texts. The interaction with different women in different situations of conflict displayed the riches in terms of the content of the Gospel of John. The diversity of the method used opens up the eyes for scholarship, that is, for the interpretation of other biblical texts in the New Testament like the one done in the Fourth Gospel. This work calls scholars to engage in a critical readings of the biblical texts, which will allow the use of a method that let the text find express without the domination of the reader. The combination of contextual biblical interpretation of the text with a feminist reading of the selected texts from John's Gospel would greatly strengthen the use of this text in peacemaking in Rwanda.

This work therefore recommends a further research of this nature on other texts in which women are only considered as passive characters deemed to submit to the oppression enforced to them by cultural norms and church's bylaw. In fact, that myth is promoted even more in the church than in other sectors because of patriarchal interpretations of the biblical text. This thesis suggests further researches of this kind on other sacred texts of faith with the use of clear contexts from which women live and labour in order to demythologize the view of their inferiority and incapacity in the development of the Church and society.

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