

**CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO HUMAN NEED: A CASE STUDY OF
MINISTRY BY CHRISTIAN NGOs TO GENOCIDE WIDOWS IN
KIGALI-VILLE PROVINCE-RWANDA.**

By

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of Masters of Theology in African Christianity to the School of Religion and
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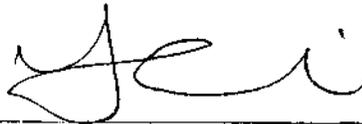
November 2005

Declaration

I declare that apart from the sources specifically acknowledged in the text, this work constitutes the results of my research in the subject and it has not been submitted either in part or whole to any other university.



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Dedication

To the memory of my father Gasana George, my great grand mother Nyirarugema Anna, and my grand mother Bahimpumbya Constance. This work is also dedicated to the memory of my brother Ndizeye Alexandre and to all innocent victims of the 1994 crisis.

May the innocent blood shed in 1994 be a constant reminder for this and future generations of the need and the duty to build a new, peaceful and harmonious nation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The achievement of this work owes much to the time, hard work and expertise of many people. Indeed, in this thesis I have several times quoted works of different scholars and I must acknowledge that I have immensely benefited from their endeavours. In this regard, I acknowledge with deep gratitude the unreserved services I received from different libraries, namely the library of the National University of Rwanda, Butare-Rwanda, the library of Carlile College School of Theology, Nairobi-Kenya and the library of Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Institute of Mission Research and Applied Theology (ACMI), Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana.

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Grandparents, Aunts and cousins for all their moral support, which I undoubtedly needed during the time of research and writing of this study.

ABSTRACT

The genocide of April 1994 left the Rwandan society completely ruined and the survivors totally disoriented with numerous problems ranging from material deprivation to bodily and psychological injuries. As in other conflicts, especially in Africa, women and children were the most affected by the Rwandan genocide; consequently Rwanda has a sizeable number of widows and orphans.

After the genocide, Rwanda witnessed an influx of many non-governmental organizations, which came with the aim to help the Rwandans in general, and genocide survivors in particular, as part of a program to put the Rwandan society back on its feet. Rwanda claims to be overwhelmingly a Christian nation, which theoretically gives the Christian community in Rwanda a prominent hand in all efforts of rebuilding the Rwandan society.

This work therefore, is a Case Study, which seeks to investigate the role of Christian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in responding to the needs of genocide widows residing in Kigali-Ville province-Rwanda. The study thus aims to assess efforts of the above-cited Christian NGOs and highlights their success and shortcomings in the light of a Christian model of understanding and responding to human needs.

The investigation also surveys the background to the genocide. It focuses on the interpretation of the history of the people of Rwanda, the role impact of the colonial rule and Christian missionaries, and the role of the civil war of early 1990s. The study also investigates the plight of genocide widows from five angles: economic loss, personal and social relationships, bodily injuries, psychological damage and spiritual welfare. The assessment was carried out through the analysis of the data collected mainly from selected Christian NGOs, genocide widows, churches, and written materials.

The paradigm used to critically analyze the response of Christian NGOs has stemmed out of a body of literature that focuses on Christian response to human need, with particular emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Rwandan context.

The findings, conclusion, recommendations of this study are of cardinal significance not only to Christian NGOs operating in Kigali-Ville province but also to other groups involved in the ministry to the needy in other parts of Rwanda and beyond her boundaries.

INSHAMAKE

Itsembatsemba n'itsembabwoko ryo muri Mata 1994 ryasize Abanyarwanda mu kaga gakabije kandi n'abarokotse basigara barenzwe n'ibibazo binyuranye, birebana n'ubukene bw'ibintu cyangwa ibikomere by'umutima. Nkuko byagenze ahandi, cyane cyane muri Afurika, abagore n'abana nibo bazahajwe cyane n'ibibazo bya jenocide yo mu Rwanda, kuko imwe mu ngaruka z'iyi jenocide ari uko u Rwanda rufite imfubyi nyinshi n'umubare munini w'abapfakazi.

Nyuma ya jenocide, u Rwanda rwagize imiryango myinshi itegamiye kuri leta yari izanywe no gufasha abanyarwanda muri rusange, n'abarokotse jenocide by'umwihariko, maze igira uruhare muri gahunda yo kongera kuremarema umuryango nyarwanda. Kuburyo budasubirwaho Rwanda ifite ishusho yo kuba igihugu cyayobotse cyane ingoma ya Kirisitu kandi imiryango nkirisitu ni ngombwa mu gihe abakirisitu bo mu Rwanda bakeneye inkunga ikomeye muri iyo mirimo yo gufasha umuryango nyarwanda.

Iki gitabo cyanditswe rero ni icyo kwiga no kumenya uruhare rw'imiryango itegamiye kuri leta yakoreye mu Rwanda kugira ngo isubize ibibazo by'abapfakazi ba jenocide mu ntara y'umuji wa Kigali. Iyi nyandiko igamije rero gusuzuma umuhate w'imiryango itegamiye kuri leta nkirisitu, no kwerekana kurushaho ubushobozi n'imikorere mibi yayo mu myumvire n'isubiza ry'ibibazo by'abaturage. Iri suzuma ryakorewe mu gusesengura ibyakusanyijwe cyane cyane mu miryango itegamiye kuri leta, ku bibazo by'abapfakazi ba jenocide, mu matorero no mu nyandiko zinyuranye.

Iyi nyandiko kandi igamije gusuzuma neza imvo n'imvano ya jenocide. Inatunga agatoki ibyanditswe ku mateka y'abanyarwanda, uruhare rw'ubutegetsi bw'abakoloni n'abamisiyoneri b'amadini nkirisitu, n'uruhare rw'intambara yo mu Rwanda yatangiye muri 1990. Uyu mwandiko unanasesengura kandi imibereho ibabaje y'abapfakazi ba jenocide mu buryo butandukanye: ibibazo by'imitungo byabahinduye abakene, imibanire yabo mu miryango no mu bandi baturanyi; ibikomere ku mubiri, ibikomere by'umutima n'imibereho y'umutimanama wabo mu busabane ku Mana.

Ibiterezo by'ingenzi mu isesengura ry'ibisubizo by'imiryango nkirisitu itegamiye kuri leta byubatswe duhereye ku byanditswe byinshi byibanda ku bisubizo by'iyobokamana mu gukemura ingorane z'abantu, kandi by'umwihariko dusesengura neza ibyabaye mu Rwanda. Ibyagezweho n'uyu mwandiko ndetse n'imyanzuro bijyana mu gutanga inama ku bigomba gukorwa no kwerekana ibyifuzo byagombye kuba ingirakamaro bitari gusa kuri ya miryango itegamiye kuri leta ikorera mu ntara y'umuji wa Kigali, ariko no mu yandi mashyirahamwe cyangwa imiryango yiyemeje gufasha abahuye n'ingorane mu bindi bice by'u Rwanda ndetse no hakurya y'imipaka y'igihugu.

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GLOSSARY OF KINYARWANDA TERMS

Ababanda, Abamengwe, Abongera, Abarenge, Abazigaba: Some of the groups of people known in the Rwandan history as having inhabited the land before the present-day inhabitants.

Ababikira b'urukundo: Catholic Nuns of Love.

Abahirika: (Lit. meaning those pushing down): members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Abanyarwanda: Rwandans.

Abanyiginya: One of the clans found in the Rwandan population.

Abapfakazi: Widows.

Abapfakazi b'itsembabwoko n'itsembambatsemba: (Lit. genocide widows) - Widows whose husbands were killed during the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Abaporoso: (Lit. those belonging to Protestants) - Protestants.

Abiragije Kirisito: Those who are under Christ's guidance.

Abo kwa Mungu Mwema: (Lit. meaning, those belonging to the Good God): members of the Pentecostal Church.

Abasangwabutaka: In the Rwandan myth, *Abasangwabutaka* mean the pioneers of the land.

Abatware: Chiefs.

Abiroma: (Lit. Those belonging to Rome) - Catholics.

Abiru: Influential ritual analysts of the court who kept the mysterious code of the monarchy.

Agahozo: (Lit. comfort) - a name which is given to the association of genocide widows.

Akamuga karuta agaturo: Rwanda proverb which means that “an infirm person is better than a tomb.”

Bene gihugu: (Lit. heirs of the land) - a concept used by Hutu extremists to support their oppressing policy towards the Tutsi.

Gihanga: In the Rwandan myth Gihanga is considered as the father of all the people.

Gacaca: Traditional form of mediation in conflicts of lineages and clans.

Gacaca Nkirisitu: Christian Gacaca.

Hutu, Tutsi, Twa: Three respective “ethnic” groups that form the population of Rwanda.

Ibimanuka: (Lit. those that descended from heavens) -a concept used in the Rwandan myth to explain the origin of the Rwanda people.

Ibitenge: Rwandan popular women dress.

Ibuka: (Lit. remember) -a name given to the association of the survivors of genocide.

Infashanyo: Aid/help.

Impiri: Traditional Rwandan weapon, which is a kind of stick with a big head and some time nails are stuck on its head to make it deadlier.

Impfubyi: Orphans.

Inkuru Nziza: (Lit. good news) - the Good News Church.

Interahamwe: (Lit. those who work together) -the militia of MRND in the 1990s.

Itsembatsemba n'itsembabwoko: (Lit. Total extermination of an ethnic group).

Ituze: Calmness

Kalinga: The drum-emblem of the Banyiginya (Tutsi) dynasty.

Kurandura irondakoko: Uprooting the concept of ethnicity.

Kwiga icyunamo: (Lit. to know how to mourn) - emotion control.

Rubanda nyamwinshi: (Lit. majority people) - a concept used in Rwanda mainly referring to the numerical superiority of the Hutu.

Ukwezi kw'impuhwe n'urukundo: The month of pity and love.

Ubuhake: Contract of clientship in pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda.

Umudugudu: The village.

Umwami: A monarch in the kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACMI: Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre.

AEE: African Evangelistic Enterprise.

APROSOMA : Association pour la Promotion de la Masse.

AVEGA : Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo.

CDR : Coalition pour la Défense de la République.

CMS: Church Missionary Society.

CMS de Biryogo: Centre Médical et Social de Biryogo.

EER: Eglise Episcopale du Rwanda.

FAR : Forces Armées Rwandaises.

FARG : Fond d'Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide.

HIV/AIDS: HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus; AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

ICTR: International Criminal Tribunal Court for Rwanda.

MOUCECORE: Mouvement Chrétien pour l'Evangelisation, Counseling et Réconciliation.

MRND : Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement.

NGO: Non Governmental Organisation.

PARMEHUTU : Parti du Mouvement de L'Emancipation Hutu.

RADER : Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais.

REACH: Reconciliation Evangelism and Christian Healing.

UN: United Nations.

UNAR: Union Nationale Rwandaise.

UNDP: United Nations Development Program.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

ABBREVIATIONS OF BIBLICAL TEXTS

Deut: Deuteronomy.

Ex: Exodus.

Gal: Galatians.

Heb: Hebrews.

Is: Isaiah.

1 Kings: 1 Kings.

Jer: Jeremiah.

Lk: Luke.

Mt: Matthew.

Ps: Psalms.

1 Thess: 1 Thessalonians.

1 Tim: 1 Timothy.

Zech: Zechariah.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the Study

This study has investigated the role of Christian NGOs in responding to the needs of the widows of the April 1994 Rwandan genocide.¹ Violence is no stranger to the Rwandan people. From the second half of the 20th century, bloody inter-ethnic conflicts between the minority Tutsi and the majority Hutu over political control of the country has characterized the history of Rwanda. However, April 1994 marked the climax of these conflicts when the Hutu government in place carried out genocide against the minority Tutsi.

Before the 1990s, Rwanda was hardly known, but the April 1994 genocide changed her image both internally and externally. Many questions have been asked following the genocide, both by the Rwandans themselves and by other concerned people: How could this happen in a country which claimed to be about 90 percent² Christian? Or how could this happen in a country that boasts of having been the cradle of the East African Revival, which swept the whole subregion from the 1930s onwards?³ Whatever the answer to these or any other related questions, Rwanda is a broken society, trying to pick up the pieces and move on. The fact is that genocide has left scars on many faces, and in many hearts. It has left a deep void in many lives. Every day is a painful reminder of the tragedy.

In a similar manner to other conflict areas on the continent, it is the most vulnerable groups: women and children, who suffered severely in the crisis. This supports a statement by the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi that:

¹ Genocide: refers to mass extermination of human beings especially of a particular ethnic group, race or nation. (According to the Oxford English Reference Dictionary)

² Ian Linden "The Church and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwandan Tragedy" in Gregory Baum and Harold Wells (eds.), *The Reconciliation of peoples: Challenge to the Churches*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997, p. 51.

³ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*. Suffolk: Highland, 1991, p.83.

... Women have dedicated themselves almost exclusively to the task of nurturing, protecting and caring for the conditions of peace that favour life as a whole. To this can be added the fact that to the best of my knowledge no war was ever started by women. But women and children have always suffered most in situations of conflicts.⁴

Eleven years after the genocide, it is the same groups again that are suffering most from its effects. Most of them are now widows *Abapfakazi*⁵ and orphans *impfubyi*⁶ who are trying to come to terms with the loss of their loved ones, the destruction of their properties and homes, and shattered hopes and expectations. Widows and orphans are by no means a new phenomenon in Rwanda, but the April 1994 genocide multiplied their numbers to an enormous extent.

Widows and orphans suffered a great deal during and after the genocide. They were raped, beaten, and experienced other forms of psychological torture and humiliation. Now they are faced with psychological trauma, loneliness, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, lack of purpose and hopelessness. The objective of this study was to investigate the response of Christian NGOs working in Kigali-Ville Province to this multifaceted problem.

Indeed, widows in the post-genocide Rwanda need material and financial help to meet their pressing basic needs (health, education, shelter, clothing, food). They also need counseling to relieve them of their psychological trauma due to rape, beating, and torture. Having suffered rape some widows are now HIV positive which means therefore, that they particularly need the Christian community to support them as they face their new and rather sad situation. They also need the Christian community to give them love, and a sense of belonging. They need a healing justice which will not only heal them as victims but also the Rwandan society as a whole, thus fostering reconciliation especially with people who offended them.

The problem of widowhood in post-genocide Rwanda exists in every corner of the country and in every aspect of daily life of the women concerned and of Rwandan

⁴ Aung San Suu Kyi, quoted by Margaret. G. Gacega "The Impact of war on African Women" in Mary, N. Getui and Hazel Hayanga (eds.), *Conflict in Africa: a Woman's Response*, Nairobi: Ruaraka Printing Press, 2002, p. 53.

⁵ The term *Abapfakazi* means Widows in Kinyarwanda, the national language of Rwanda.

⁶ The term *Impfubyi* means orphans in Kinyarwanda.

society. Therefore, are the efforts of Christian NGOs being directed at the social, economic and spiritual aspects of life of the beneficiaries?

This study has a three-fold motivation: Christian, Biblical⁷, and Personal.

First, as mentioned earlier, Rwanda is predominantly Christian, which means therefore, that the Christian community in post-genocide Rwanda should be in the front line fulfilling its Christian obligation to care for the victims of the tragic events of April 1994.

Second, this study is also motivated by the fact that from both biblical accounts and other historical evidence we learn how God has always wanted His people to show love, compassion and protection to the underprivileged who are among them; the way He himself does.

Old Testament traditions portray the Lord God as the protector of the weak and vulnerable, including widows and orphans: "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation" (Ps 68: 5). "He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing" (Deut 10: 18).

God wanted Israel to be the kind of society that provided social justice, care and special sensibility to groups of vulnerable people.

At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and lay it up within your towns; and the Levite...and the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do (Deut 14: 28-29).

Indeed, as Alan Cole has rightly observed, caring for the underprivileged is basic to Israel's law, not a deduction from it. Israel must care for the poor and helpless, because YHWH cares for them, for that is His very nature.⁸ In this regard, whoever does not show compassion to the needy and the weak or tends to exploit their

⁷ All biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

⁸ Alan R. Cole. *Exodus: An introduction and commentary*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985, p. 174.

vulnerability arouses God's anger; the laws God gave to Israel clearly sought to protect the underprivileged of the society:

You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless (Ex 22: 22-24).

His prophets constantly called on the people of Israel to act justly, and to show mercy and compassion to the poor and weak people among them:

Thus says the Lord of hosts, render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor (Zech 7: 9- 10).

Disobeying this command results in condemnation. As Raymond F. Collins has observed:

During the renewal of the covenant, a curse is laid upon those who deprive any of these disadvantaged people of their due (Deut 27:19; see Ex 22: 22-24). Prophetic oracles called for people to do right by orphans and widows. They railed against those who did not do so. With encouragement and threats the prophets urged the people of Israel to remember the needs of the alien, the orphan, and the widow.⁹

New Testaments accounts prove in many ways that caring for the needy is indeed one of the key pillars of the Christian faith as Barclay has observed: "The Christian Church inherited a fine tradition of charity to those in need. No people has ever cared more for its needy and its aged than the Jews."¹⁰

The Christian Church as a community of believers and followers of Jesus Christ ought to build its foundation on holiness through right worship but also on practicing love and mercy to neighbors. In this respect Christians should know and acknowledge the weak and the poor who are among them so that they can help them in every possible way that God would enable them as illustrated in 1 Timothy 5:3: "Honour widows who are real widows."

⁹ Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus a commentary*, Louisville: Westminster, 2002, p. 135.

¹⁰ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (Revised Edition), Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p.105.

In Luke 7: 11-17, Jesus leads his disciples by example by showing them how to care for widows. As He approached the town gate he heard the cry of a woman, a widow who had lost her only son. His heart was filled with compassion and he mercifully intervened by raising the young man from the dead. By so doing, Jesus restored the widow's hope and expectation, which prior to Jesus' intervention were dashed.

In this case, Jesus showed love and understanding vis-à-vis that woman's hopelessness and He did what he could as God to save the situation. In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, considering how significantly the number of widows increased, it is fair to expect Christians in Rwanda to live up to Christian traditions and teachings and meet that challenge.

This study aimed at finding out whether the Christian community in Kigali-Ville is showing love and compassion and understanding to genocide widows, and, whether it is using its available human and financial resources to assist them to meet their most pressing needs. In losing their husbands, and in some cases all of their children, have genocide widows been able to find comfort and hope in the body of Christ? The above Old and the New Testament references provide Christians with the biblical basis to minister to needy people in a way that restores hope, human dignity and harmonious relationships between God and humanity as well as between human beings themselves.

Robert Moffitt in his interpretation of Matthew 22:36 observes that "human completeness is found in responding to spiritual, social, and physical needs together."¹¹ Waldron Scott in his article "Mercy and Social Transformation" gives a detailed account of Church involvement in the ministries of mercy to the needy of the society from the apostolic times to present times. For instance in the Middle ages:

Pope Gregory the Great (A.D. 590-604) was one such person. As Pope he continued the austere simplicity of monastic life, and at the same time he excelled in charity. He fed the hungry from his own frugal table; he intervened continually in favor of injured widows, and orphans; he redeemed slaves and captives and sanctioned the sale of consecrated vessels for charity; and he made efforts (though in vain) to check the slave-trade.¹²

¹¹ Robert Moffitt, "The Local Church and Development", Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, p. 236.

¹² Waldron Scott, "Mercy and Social Transformation", Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, p. 210.

The ministry to the needy does not have to confine itself to the community of believers or members of a given church or denomination. On the contrary it reaches to everyone in need.

These studies of the theme noted above and other relevant studies based on Old Testament and New Testament sources were used to establish the biblical basis and the intellectual framework for evaluating the Christian response in the ministry of the NGOs that have provided the primary data for this study.

The third factor motivating this study is that as a Rwandan who was in Rwanda before and during the tragedy of April 1994 and now living in post-genocide Rwanda, I am personally concerned and affected by the loss of innocent lives and the pain that struck my country and I am deeply convinced that the plight of widows of genocide in Rwanda calls for a wholehearted response from everyone.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In the post-genocide Rwanda, a number of Christian NGOs¹³ have emerged trying to address the plight of genocide widows. Our preliminary investigations have shown that not all genocide widows have been identified and even some who have been identified have not received all the care and support they need. This study therefore, investigated whether Christian NGOs in Kigali-Ville province are providing holistic care and support to widows of genocide in view of the Christian traditions of providing care and healing to the vulnerable in the society.

In endeavouring to pursue this investigation, the following questions are pertinent:

Who are genocide widows?

What are the problems of genocide widows?

How do Christian NGOs perceive their role in meeting the needs of widows?

¹³ Christian NGOs in this study are understood as Christian faith based non-governmental organizations. They are deemed Christian organizations because the motivation of their actions is drawn from Christian traditions as well as biblical teachings which call upon the Christian community to care for the poor and the vulnerable of society namely orphans and the widows.

How are Christian NGOs cooperating with other bodies or institutions involved in helping the same people?

What kind of actions do Christians NGOs engage in, in order to meet the needs of genocide widows?

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- a) discuss the factors behind the plight of widows of genocide in Rwanda.
- b) investigate the role of the Christian community in Kigali-Ville in creating awareness about the plight of genocide widows.
- c) explore the mechanisms that the Christian community in Rwanda has established to help widows of April 1994 genocide recover from their trauma.
- d) evaluate the contribution of Christian NGOs in helping genocide widows to regain their social status, justice and dignity.
- e) analyze how the Christian community is facilitating reconciliation of widows with their offenders and the rest of Rwandan society.
- f) provide strategies that may be used by Christian NGOs, the Church and other policy makers in providing more effective and holistic ministry to genocide widows.

1.3. Research Premises

This study is guided by the following assumptions:

- a) Widows in Kigali-Ville province suffer socially, spiritually and economically due to the experiences of April 1994 genocide in Rwanda.
- b) Christian NGOs operating in Kigali-Ville have responded to genocide widows' social, economic, spiritual and psychological needs.

c) The Christian community has facilitated reconciliation of genocide widows with their offenders and the rest of the Rwandan society.

d) The Christian community has established various mechanisms to help genocide widows to recover from their trauma.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in various ways. It contributes to the literature on the Rwandan genocide; more especially it highlights the factors behind the consequences of the worst personal, social, and economic crisis Rwanda has ever known. Moreover, it also aims at creating awareness about the plight of genocide widows.

By examining and evaluating the mechanisms Christian NGOs have put in place to respond to a crisis that has existed within a self-confessed Christian environment, this dissertation makes a contribution to a better understanding of the role and function of Christians in society.

The findings and recommendations of this study therefore, aim to help Christian NGOs assisting genocide widows to improve their service towards them. This study critiques the existing strategies and proposes new ways which Christian NGOs can adopt in their ministry to genocide widows. The findings and recommendations of this study may assist people not only within Kigali-Ville province and Christian NGOs working there but the whole country, the Church and other communities outside Rwanda that may face similar problems because genocide is a social crisis which can occur in any society.

1.5. Literature Review

The literature reviewed for this study covers five areas: the different factors behind the genocide; the role of Christianity in the Rwandan genocide; the plight of the genocide widows; responding to human needs; and, the relationships between helpers and beneficiaries. After the tragedy of April 1994, many articles and books on the Rwandan genocide were published with a view to explain the roots and causes of that tragedy. Literature on Rwandan history, culture, and politics provide a base to understand the background of the April 1994 Genocide.

Servilien M. Sebasoni¹⁴ gives us a comprehensive definition of Rwandan identity. In his view, four elements; common territory, common history, same language and culture, and one nation constitute a solid ground to the common Rwandan identity.

This is indeed, a key factor to the understanding of the genesis of the Rwandan genocide in the sense that its perpetrators inexplicably saw their victims (Tutsi) as aliens. One of the aims of this study is to assess the efforts of Christian NGOs in the process of reconciling Rwandan people. This literature has assisted us in seeing how Christian NGOs build on that common national heritage to teach and preach reconciliation to three ethnic groups (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) that compose the Rwandan population as well as reminding them of their oneness in Jesus Christ, bearing in mind that most of the Rwandan people still claim to be Christians.

Nevertheless, the above mentioned author brings out clearly the role of the first¹⁵ and the second republic¹⁶ in distorting the Rwandan identity but he doesn't seem to underline the role of some of the traditional practices observed during the monarchical times namely "Ubugake" in fuelling tensions between different ethnic groups in Rwanda. This study examines the historical development of the Rwandan identity and underlines the fact that the existence of same clans across all ethnic groups contributes hugely in cementing the oneness of the Rwandan people.

¹⁴ Servilien, M. Sebasoni, *Les Origines du Rwanda*, Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, S.A, 1996.

¹⁵ The regime of President Grégoire Kayibanda

¹⁶ The regime of President Juvénal Habyarimana

Charles Kabwete Mulinda¹⁷ writes on one of the thorniest and most controversial issues concerning Rwandan population; the possible origin and order of arrival into Rwanda of different ethnic groups. Mulinda surveys the works of early writers of the history of Rwanda such as Kagame Alexis and Albert Pagès who are commonly perceived as early pace setters in that field. Ideology that led to the genocide was built on theories advanced by these early writers in their attempt to explain the origin of the people of Rwanda by the Bantu and Hamitic hypothesis. The Tutsi, the victims of genocide, were widely believed to be of Hamitic origin and the last group to enter Rwanda after the Twa (pigmies) and the Hutu (Bantu) respectively, which in the eyes of their offenders gave them a status of aliens with devastating effects in April 1994. According to these early writers of the history of Rwanda, the Tutsi in spite of their numeric inferiority and late arrival were able to use their allegedly superior cattle-related culture and ruse to conquer and subdue the majority Hutu until the second half of the 20th century. With the help of colonial forces after independence (1st July 1962), the Hutu took and monopolized power.

Moreover, prior to the arrival of Europeans, Rwandan people had in their own traditional way tried to answer the question of their origin as Mulinda observed. Like in any other primal society, the Rwandans passed on myths from one generation to another explaining their origins. These myths say that Rwandans have different origins; some make them descendants of one common ancestor *Gihanga*¹⁸ while others give them a celestial *Ibimanuka*¹⁹ or terrestrial origin *Abasangwabutaka*.²⁰ These myths are a prominent feature of Rwandan culture and history; their reason d'être was and still is innocent and the explanations they give were never perceived as a reason for exterminating one another.

This author has done commendable work in challenging different theories that over the years have made Rwandans strangers in their own land. Nevertheless he doesn't seem to emphasize enough the role of modern education, the writings of local academicians and politicians and political slogans especially in early 1990s; in exacerbating ethnic tensions. They brought back to political dialogues theories about possible origins and date of arrivals of different ethnic groups in Rwanda.

¹⁷ Charles, K. Mulinda, "La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda: Considérations sur l'autochtonie ou l'allochtonie des rwandais" in *Peuplement du Rwanda: Enjeux et perspectives*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, 2002.

¹⁸ Gihanga is considered like the father of all people.

¹⁹ Meaning those that descended from heavens.

²⁰ Meaning the pioneers of the land.

Jean Paul Kimonyo²¹ critically analyses factors behind the genocide in Rwanda from several perspectives: historical, socio-economic, political and ideological. It seems that, the ideology of genocide had penetrated all aspects of Rwandan society. In spite of well thought and integrated analyses of different factors that might have contributed to the taking place of the 1994 genocide, the author doesn't seem to emphasize enough the role of monarchial traditions and practices that fuelled political ideologies of the 1950s, 60s, 70s and most importantly 1990s. This work nevertheless provides us with valuable background information to the 1994 genocide.

In the literature related to the role of Christianity in the genocide, Paul Rutayisire²² surveys the history of Christianity in Rwanda and shows how, together with colonial masters Christian leaders contributed to the dismantling of the Rwandan traditional and cultural institutions, which united the whole population of Rwanda regardless of ethnic groups. By so doing the Church contributed to promoting the spirit of division and ethnicity. The author seems to have singled out only the Catholic Church as the only church that has played a prominent role in dismantling the Rwandan culture, which is to a large extent true given its dominance. The protestant missionaries also contributed to the destruction of the Rwandan culture as they based their success on those converted confessing their turning away from cultural practices and beliefs.

Ian Linden²³ reviews various factors that contributed to genocide in Rwanda, but more importantly the complex involvement of the Church in genocide. These points are crucial, because this study attempted to assess to what extent the Christian Church in Rwanda is using its teachings to correct errors of the past and reconcile the people of Rwanda.

In the same line of thought, Hugh McCullum²⁴ used first hand information collected during and shortly after the genocide to make a detailed anatomy of the tragedy. He

²¹ Jean Paul Kimonyo, "Revue critique des interprétations du conflit rwandais" in *Peuplement du Rwanda: Enjeux et perspectives*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, 2002.

²² Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la colonization" in *Ruptures socio-culturelles et conflit au Rwanda*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, 1999.

²³ Ian Linden "The Church and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwandan Tragedy" in Baum, Gregory and Harold Wells (eds.), *The Reconciliation of Peoples Challenge to the Churches*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.

²⁴ Hugh McCullum, *The Angels Have Left Us: The Rwanda Tragedy and the Churches*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1995.

unveils and utterly condemns the indifference of the international community to the Rwandan tragedy but most importantly he gives a detailed analysis of the powerlessness and involvement in the genocide of the Rwandan Christian Churches. He explores strategies, which the Church as an institution and church leaders may adopt in order to promote healing for a better Rwanda. This book is very significant to the study for it shows the impact of the genocide on Rwandan society, despite lacking a focus on genocide widows.

The organization, **African Rights Working for Justice**, in their report of April 2004, *RWANDA Broken Bodies, Torn spirits Living with Genocide, rape and HIV/ AIDS*, gives us a detailed account of the horror of April 1994 genocide with particular emphasis on the rape of women. In the Rwandan genocide, women of all ages²⁵ were repeatedly raped and many even gang-raped. By all standards, rape of women has turned out to be a weapon of human destruction and total humiliation.²⁶ Indeed, ten years on many of the victims are now facing the nightmare of HIV/AIDS! It is no surprise therefore that many of the raped women who are now HIV positive, still believe that their lives ended in 1994!

This report is of crucial importance to our study because it highlights the horrific experience of women during the genocide and their devastating consequences, which are the subject of this study. Moreover, this study complements this report by exploring other facets of the sufferings women endured during the genocide and how they are related to rape and its consequences.

Notwithstanding the tragic events on April 1994, Rwanda still claims to be overwhelmingly Christian, which means therefore that the Rwandan Christian community cannot afford to be indifferent to the plight of genocide widows. Consequently, the call to intervene is not a matter of need but of what should be done and how.

Among the great variety of literature related to responding to human needs, Samuel Baah²⁷ in his article uses the examples of Moses and Jesus to support his perspective

²⁵ According to the report, the youngest victim interviewed was just six in 1994, and the oldest 71, p. 6.

²⁶ It is important to note that not every raped woman during genocide has openly admitted it. Even those who did admit having been raped, not all of them have gone for HIV/AIDS test.

²⁷ Samuel Baah, "The Genesis of Human Needs", in Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

on Christian response to human need. In his view, Christians should emulate the examples of Moses and Jesus, since their ministries were directed towards and met both spiritual and physical needs.

Samuel Baah further argues that the mission of the Christian Church is not only about evangelizing and converting people; rather it has a social responsibility, which connotes therefore that it ought to respond to social ills and human needs and hurts. The task of evangelism and conversion, he says, enlarges the spiritual and social responsibilities of the church. Therefore it is here, he suggests, that the power of love and compassion ought to be exercised.

John Stott²⁸ also highlights the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility. One of the arguments he evokes for this relationship to be more beneficial and relevant is the character of God. He states that God cares for the poor and the hungry, the alien, the widow and the orphan. He further observes that God tells His people to be the voice of the voiceless and the defender of the powerless, and so to express His love for them. Other authors suggest that looking after the needy and vulnerable is not only about meeting their most immediate or most pressing needs, it is also about transforming their social situation as illustrated by the following three writers.

Waldron Scott²⁹ suggests that ministries of mercy may also contribute to radical social transformation- a more or less complete change in character and condition of a society. He further remarks that this transformation can only be possible when acts of mercy are rendered in organized and systematic ways, and especially when they are rendered as some sort of corporate endeavor. This study has built on the contribution of the above authors to demonstrate that genocide widows can draw motivation from the church message and teachings and create a new focus and place in their lives and society. By so doing widows would rise from the position of the weak and victims into

²⁸ John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian: an urgent plea for double listening*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992.

²⁹ Waldron Scott, "Mercy and Social Transformation", in Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

the position of responsibility and power as they strive to transform their predicament into a better situation.

John Mary Walligo³⁰ states that we have to believe that a problem seen is half solved. Moreover, he argues that we have to believe in the power of men and women to change situations for the better and to solve the problems that exist. Based on this assertion, this study argued that it is the responsibility of Christian NGOs operating in Rwanda to create awareness among the people in general and Christians in particular about the problems left behind by the genocide and their possible responses to these problems.

Other writers such as Mulambya P. Kabonde³¹, Michael C. Kirwen³² and Daisy N. Nwachuku³³ use their studies on widowhood in different countries in Africa to highlight the role of the Church and the rest of the Christian community in helping widows to face their new situation. Their ideas have therefore informed this study.

Redmond Mullin³⁴ suggests that relations and attitudes between donors and recipients are of cardinal significance in the sense that recipients are taken into consideration in defining strategies of dispensing relief services and they contribute to the success and acceptability of the services. This point is of crucial importance in this study, since Christians not only have a responsibility to care for the poor and needy, but also to listen to them and consider their views in the process of assisting them.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The widows of April 1994 genocide fall into the category of people who need help and support of all kinds. Physically, they have lost their properties and goods.

³⁰ John Mary Walligo, "Pastoral Action with and for the Poor and Disadvantaged" in Aylward Shorter and John Mary Walligo (eds.), *Towards African Christian Maturity*, Kampala: St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1987.

³¹ Mulambya P. Kabonde, "Widowhood in Zambia: The Effects of Ritual" in Kanyoro R.A. Musimbi and Njoroge J. Nyambura (eds.), *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1996.

³² Michael C. Kirwen, *African Widows*, New York: Maryknoll, 1979.

³³ Daisy N. Nwachuku, "The Christian Widow in Africa Culture", in Oduyoye, Amba Mercy and Kanyoro R.A. Musimbi (eds.), *The will to arise: women Tradition, and the Church in Africa*, New York: Maryknoll, 1992.

³⁴ Redmond Mullin, *The Wealth of Christians*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Socially, they have lost their dignity and status and they are defenseless and voiceless. They may have little purpose in life and they are weak and spiritually low.

In the light of this situation that the widows of genocide face and other consequences of genocide, the efforts of those helping them should address their physical, social and spiritual needs as well as aiming at an integral transformation of the Rwandan society. For these reasons the theoretical framework for this study stems from a body of literature that focuses on integral human transformation reflected in the writing of authors such as Chris Sugden³⁵, Bryant Myers,³⁶ Wayne G. Bragg,³⁷ Robert Moffitt,³⁸ Chavannes Jeune³⁹ and Edward R. Dayton.⁴⁰

However this study has adapted and used the model of “integral human development”,⁴¹ suggested by Darrell L. Whiteman as the basis for evaluating the situation of the widows and the efforts of Christian NGOs directed to ministering to them. Whiteman’s “Wheel of Integral Human Development” is drawn from a model that was developed and applied in the Solomon Islands. Furthermore, although Whiteman adopted this model and applied it to the area of “Bible translation”, his definition of “integral human development” is appropriate for this study. His classification of human needs provides a framework for investigating the efforts of Christians organizations involved in the ministry of helping widows of the April 1994 genocide.

Whiteman refers to several approaches to interpret the plight of vulnerable people, and to meet their needs and effect individual and communal transformation. He understands integral human development “as a mechanism that enables beneficiaries

³⁵ Chris Sugden, 2003 “Transformational Development: Current state of understanding and practice”, in *Transformation an International Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, Vol. 20 No 2 (April), pp. 70-76.

³⁶ Bryant Myers. 2000 “The church and transformational development” in *Transformation an International Evangelical Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, Vol. 17 No 2 (April/June), pp. 64-67.

³⁷ Wayne G. Bragg, “From Development to Transformation”, in Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

³⁸ Robert Moffitt, “The Local Church and Development”, Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

³⁹ Chavannes Jeune, “Justice, Freedom, and Social Transformation”, in Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

⁴⁰ Edward R. Dayton, “Social Transformation: The Mission of God”, in Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.), *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

⁴¹ Darrel L. Whiteman, “Bible Translation and Social and Cultural Development” in Philip C. Stine (ed.), *Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church in the last 200 years*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990, pp. 120-133.

to gain control over themselves, their environment and their future in order to realize the full potential of life that God has made possible.”⁴² Therefore, integral human development in the context of this study of the ministry to genocide widows concerns enabling them to regain and confirm their full social status and dignity in Rwandan society.

In his analysis, three main points characterize the integral human development model: First, it is integrated, holistic and addresses six basic human needs: physical, social, self-esteem, purpose, security and spiritual. Whiteman argues that; “when these needs are met, then we find the kind of community... God intends for us.”⁴³

Second, the integral human development focuses on people not on projects. Third, integral human development gives importance to the spiritual dimension and moral values.

It is also important to note that integral human development takes place at three levels- Individual Level, Community Level and Inter-Community Level. This is highly significant for the Rwandan situation as many widows are still dealing with the personal impact of the genocide as well as having to relate to their communities.

For the purposes of discussion and analysis, Whiteman divides the human person and community into four major areas: **personal growth, material growth, social growth and spiritual growth.**

Each of these four areas encompasses various components:

- 1. Personal Growth:** *Nutrition, health, self-Reliance, Self- Respect, Security*
- 2. Material Growth:** *Money, Transportation, Land Ownership, Land Use, Communication.*
- 3. Social Growth:** *Education, Relationships, Solidarity, Autonomy, and Participation*
- 4. Spiritual Growth:** *Love, Prayer, Hope, Peace, Faith*

Using the image of a bicycle wheel (see below Fig. 1), Whiteman observes that unless there is a comparative development in the different components, the efforts would result in unbalanced development and possibly even be counterproductive. He remarks:

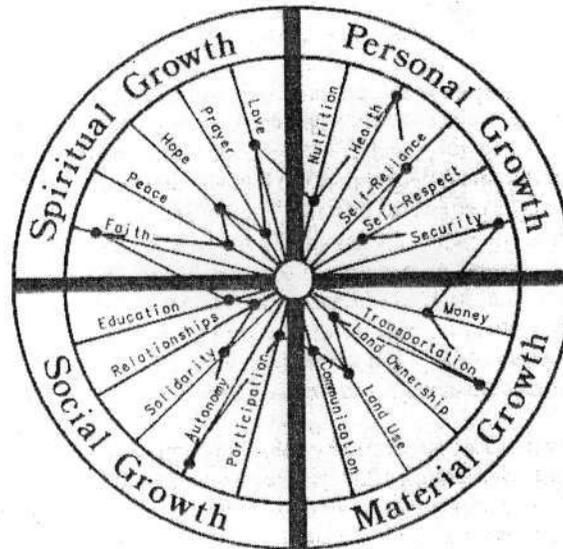
If the different components develop together then the wheel is round and the “ride” will be rather smooth. If some components are developed while others are neglected then we get an aberration of

⁴² Darrell L. Whiteman, “Bible Translation and Social and Cultural Development”, p. 125.

⁴³ Darrel L. Whiteman, “ Bible Translation and Social and Cultural Development”, p. 125.

development that is no longer conceptually like a wheel, and to continue the metaphor, people in this situation are in for a rough ride.⁴⁴

Fig. 1 Wheel of Integral Human Development



By adapting this model to the Rwandan context, this study aimed not only at identifying and categorizing various needs of genocide widows but also seeking to stress the need for having an effective and coordinated way of responding to human need. Moreover adapting this model to post-genocide Rwanda implies that components such as shelter, reconciliation, forgiveness and empowerment that are relevant to the Rwandan context have to be incorporated in it.

1.7. 0. Research Methodology

1.7.1. Research Design

This research is primarily qualitative. The data was mainly collected through a limited number of interviews and written sources. This study sought to find out in what ways Christian NGOs are assisting genocide widows in Kigali-Ville.

1.7. 2. Research Area

This study was confined to Kigali-Ville province, which includes eight districts and the city of Kigali the capital of Rwanda. Kigali-Ville is situated more or less at the

⁴⁴ Darrell L. Whiteman, "Bible Translation and Social and Cultural Development", p. 126.

center of the country near the outlet of the basin of River Nyabarongo. Originally the City of Kigali was built on the flanks of Nyarugenge hill in 1907 at the choice of Dr Kandt the first German Resident Governor of Rwanda. The City gradually grew to occupy 200 hectares by the time of independence. Today the Kigali-Ville province covers 349 Km² with a population of 800,000.

1.7.3. Limitations of the Study

Although eleven years have passed since the genocide, the horror of genocide remains fresh in the mind of many. In some cases it was difficult in interviews for some people to talk about it because they felt they were let down by their fellow Christians. Furthermore, because the genocide was closely linked to local politics, some informants found it difficult to speak about it.

The problem of widowhood is always closely linked to the problem of orphans. However, because of time and financial constraints this study has only focused on widows. After the genocide many churches and para-church organizations undertook various projects and initiatives with a view to helping the surviving widows but because of time and financial constraints this study has only focused on the response of Christian NGOs.

1.7.4. Sample and Sampling procedure and Data Collection

The samples for this study comprised two main groups of informants and a control group. The first group of informants was composed of the Christian NGOs working in Kigali-Ville. Eight Christian NGOs were identified: Caritas Rwanda, World Vision, Christian Aid, African Evangelistic Enterprise, Solace Ministries, Reach, World Relief Rwanda, MOUCECORE (Mouvement Chrétien pour l'Évangélisation, Counseling et Réconciliation).⁴⁵

The second group of informants was composed of the widows of genocide. Employing purposive sampling technique, two widows were selected from each of the

⁴⁵ Christian Movement for Counseling, Evangelism and Reconciliation.

eight districts of Kigali-Ville province. In collaboration with staff of NGOs and local churches the researcher was able to find and identify genocide widows for interviews. The selection of interviewees was based upon various factors namely the experiences widows went through during the genocide: rape and beatings and other forms of torture; their socio-economic status: formal employment, shelter, education, and having children.

A control group was an important part of this study; it was formed with a view of providing another perspective for assessing the performance of NGOs in the same ministry. The control group was composed of Christian churches operating in Kigali-Ville and two associations of genocide survivors namely Ibuka and AVEGA Agahozo.⁴⁶

Three churches were identified: The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and Inkuru Nziza (The Good News Church). The Anglican and Catholic churches were chosen because they are more ubiquitous both in Kigali-Ville and in other parts of the country than any other Church. Furthermore it was important to examine and evaluate churches' actions in order to see how Christians have responded to the aftermath of genocide. The Catholic and Anglican ministers interviewed lead parishes that receive and help needy people from different parts of the city of Kigali regardless of their religious affiliation.

The Good News Church was included into the control group for three reasons: first, the Good News Church is not one of the mainstream churches operating in Rwanda. Second, the Good News Church was well established and working in Kigali-Ville before the genocide; third, even before genocide the Good News Church was involved in assisting the needy including widows, orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS in different parts of Kigali-Ville. Because of the above elements, the data from the Good News Church provided this study with a different but useful perspective in assessing the performances of Christian NGOs involved in the same ministry.

The associations AVEGA Agahozo and Ibuka were included in the control group because they are national organizations concerned with the welfare of genocide

⁴⁶ Association des Veuves du Genocide (Association of the Widows of Genocide).

survivors in general; and AVEGA Agahozo is concerned in particular with widows. Therefore, their views on how Christian NGOs help widows gave this study another perspective on the performance of Christian NGOs with regards to the ministry to genocide widows.

In order to gather the relevant information for this study, data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. The main primary sources were through interviews. A series of interview questions were used to conduct oral interviews. Interviews were conducted in *Kinyarwanda*, which is also the national language of Rwanda. Eighteen genocide widows, 14 people from NGOs and 3 ministers were interviewed resulting in a total of 35 interviews being completed. Information was recorded in audiotapes, and was translated into English and written down for analysis. The researcher personally conducted the interviews. The secondary data was derived from the library materials as well as field reports compiled by NGOs. All the data collected through interviews and other relevant documents, was thematically analyzed in accordance to the objectives of this study.

1. 8. Research Ethics

This study has endeavoured to respect the requirements of ethical standards. As mentioned earlier, the genocide is still a very delicate issue in Rwanda, therefore, some informants preferred to remain anonymous and their wishes were respected. Similarly, some informants requested for a copy of the final dissertation, with a view to verifying whether their story remained or was distorted. Their wish has been respected. Discussing genocide and its consequences with survivors can be highly emotional; therefore it was crucial to express sympathy, patience and understanding to them.

1.9. Problems experienced in Research

Generally speaking, during the course of this research there were no significant problems. However, some of the selected informants were unavailable when needed while others were reserved and less cooperative in terms of giving out relevant

information. However, through patience, persistence and willingness to visit a person more than once or twice enabled the researcher was able to surmount the above-cited obstacles. Through expressing his sympathy, understanding and in some cases promise of anonymity, the researcher was able to encourage reluctant, reserved and suspicious informants so that they provided adequate information. The names of interviewees have only been used in this dissertation where they expressly gave permission to do so; otherwise, it is indicated in the text where a person did not desire to be known.

1.10. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with perspectives through which a Christian response by Christian NGOs to the needs of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville Province could be analyzed. In this chapter six objectives and four premises were set as guiding tools for the accomplishment of this study. It also showed ways in which findings and recommendations of this study are significant and relevant not only to the Rwandan society but also to other societies. Different types of literature were surveyed in an attempt to get a fuller and clearer picture of the Rwandan genocide, the context into which it took place, and various views on Christian response to human needs. Considering the predicament of the genocide widows in Kigali-Ville Province and different views on Christian response to human needs, this chapter established a theoretical framework of "Integral Human Transformation" which has stemmed from a body of works of different authors including Darrell L. Whiteman, Bryant L. Myers, Wayne G. Bragg, Robert Moffitt, Chavannes Jeune, and Edwards R. Dayton. This chapter has also dealt with research methodology. The next chapter will highlight the root-causes of the genocide, by analyzing different contributing factors from historical, socio-economic, and political perspectives.

CHAPTER 2

THE BACKGROUND TO THE GENOCIDE

2.0. Introduction

This chapter surveys the history of Rwanda, before and after the arrival of Europeans and highlights factors that contributed to the genocide from both secular and religious contexts. It is widely believed that the causes of the Rwandan genocide are rooted in the history of Rwanda. Colonial powers and church authorities both undermined and restructured cultural and traditional institutions. This contributed to the disappearance of the spirit of oneness and togetherness that bound the Rwandans as one people and it gave rise to the ethnic division. The Rwandans became divided along ethnic lines as well as church affiliation as the Catholic Church and the colonial masters sought to dominate and establish their authority in Rwanda.⁴⁷ Consequently, unlike other missions, the Catholic Church institutional and territorial domination of Rwanda became obvious and influential during and after the colonial times. This will be discussed in detail, later in this chapter.

During and after colonization, Rwanda experienced ethnic strife between the Hutu and the Tutsi as the desire for political domination overshadowed their social relationships. The shift of support and bias from one group to another by Catholic missionaries and colonizers in the line of their interests divided the Rwandan society even further. April 1994 marked the climax of a long running crisis between the Hutu and the Tutsi which resulted in the genocide of the Tutsi. To place this history in its context, the chapter commences with geography of Rwanda.

2.1. Geographical background

Rwanda is one of smallest countries of Africa situated at the heart of the African continent. It is a landlocked nation with a total surface area of only 26,338 square

⁴⁷ Paul Rutayisre. "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation" in *Ruptures socio-culturelles et conflit au Rwanda*, Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, 1999, p. 36-7.

kilometers and is surrounded by the countries of Uganda in the north, Tanzania in the east, Burundi in the south and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West.

Before April 1994, many people knew little about Rwanda, except its geographical landscape and natural resources. Indeed rivers, lakes, hills, rocks, caves and volcanoes have had great social, political and cultural significance in the history of Rwanda.

Among many rivers that run across the country, three⁴⁸ are arguably the most famous: Akanyaru, Nyabarongo and Akagera. The Akanyaru River flows in the southern part where it marks a natural border with Burundi. The Nyabarongo River, which the first German resident M. Kandt called "Caput Nili"⁴⁹ (source of Nil), is a convergent of two smaller rivers, Mwogo and Rukarara, which begin their sources in the southwest Rwanda. The Nyabarongo River runs across the country and flows into the Akanyaru River in the southeastern part. After their junction, they both change names and become the Akagera River, which marks the eastern border with Tanzania and flows eastwards into Lake Victoria.

Rwanda contains many lakes, the most important being Lake Kivu measuring 120 kilometers long and 40 to 50 kilometers wide. It is situated in the western part where it marks the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. The northwestern part of Rwanda is best known for its chain of volcanoes. Kalisimbi is the tallest reaching a height 4, 506 meters.

The country has a temperate climate, with two main rainy seasons (February to April and November to January). The differences of temperatures between regions are directly due to the differences of altitude because the average temperature drops off 0° 50 every 100m.⁵⁰ Besides its temperate climate, the country is also known for its beautiful terrain with mostly grassy uplands and gently rolling hills. Its abundant wildlife includes the mountain gorillas which add to the beauty of Rwanda, especially for lovers of rare species.

⁴⁸ During the genocide, several hundreds of victims were mercilessly thrown into these rivers for their final journey. In fact, it was those scenes of floating dead bodies all the way from Rwandan rivers to the shores of Lake Victoria that convinced the outside world that indeed genocide was taking place in Rwanda.

⁴⁹ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, Bruxelles: Librairie Falk fils, 1930, p. 27.

⁵⁰ P. Sirven J.F. Gotanegre C. Prioul, *Géographie du Rwanda*, Bruxelles: Editions A. De Boeck, 1974, p.23.

In spite of the natural attractiveness of Rwanda, the April 1994 genocide brought to light another side of Rwanda: the inter-ethnic conflict. Ironically during the crisis, the icons of the beauty of Rwanda, namely the above-mentioned rivers, became also the symbol of the sad event as they were turned into dumping places of dead bodies. Following genocide, many questions have been asked in an attempt to understand the reasons which might have led to it, such as: Who are the Rwandan people? Where did they come from? How different are they from each other? How have they been living together?

2.2. Rwanda and its Inhabitants

Controversy surrounds the theories about how Rwanda was populated and whether or not the Rwandan population is composed of different ethnic groups. Following the carnage of April 1994, more and more authors have written about the history of the Rwandans, but more importantly there is the tendency to revisit and critique earlier theories.

The origin of Rwandan people was of great interest for early explorers, anthropologists, missionaries and colonizers at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵¹ As in other parts of Africa, these early writers were concerned with the idea of classifying indigenous people of Africa into different races, ethnic groups, castes or classes. Indeed, it was during this early phase of colonization of the African continent that the Hamitic hypothesis became popular because it tended to suggest that any form of civilization or evolution seen in Africa was the work of Hamitic population who were allegedly of Caucasian origin and who had immigrated into Africa through North Africa. Such arguments therefore, tended to deny that black Africans were capable of creating any viable political, social, technical or advanced cultural organizations.⁵²

Besides the Hamitic hypothesis, another hypothesis namely the Bantu hypothesis was advanced which referred to physical features of people, spoken languages, and other

⁵¹ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 49.

⁵² Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 49.

cultural characteristics.⁵³ These theories were accepted and popularized by new colonial powers in Africa with regard to their relations with indigenous people. Needless to say that colonial rulers and missionaries also applied these theories to the Rwandan people.

Earlier writers of the history of Rwanda, namely Catholic priests, among them Father Alexis Kagame and Father Albert Pagès suggested different theories about places from which the Rwandan groups of Tutsi, Hutu and Twa may have originated and how they have settled into Rwanda. In his attempt to explain the probable origin of the Tutsi, Pagès favored the Hamitic hypothesis. He suggested that they might have originated from Egypt or Abyssinia. Their physical features, beauty and elegance in his view made them very close to the Egyptians,

Il y en a qui mesurent jusqu' à 2 mètres et même 2m10. Ils ont les membres bien proportionnés, les traits réguliers, le nez droit, les lèvres fines, et présentent des ressemblances remarquables avec les Pharaons d'Égypte. Comme les Ethiopiens, les Batutsi sont caractérisés par leur teint brun avec un reflet rougeâtre, au moins chez certains types, et par leur visage allongé un peu en ovale.⁵⁴

Some are up to 2 meters tall and some even 2m 10. They have well sculpted features, a straight nose, thin lips and a striking resemblance to Egyptian pharaohs. Like Ethiopians, the Tutsi are known by their light complexion and slightly reddish, at least in some of them, and by the long oval face.

Pagès classified in the same family of the Hamites, the Bahima of Uganda, the Banyambo of Tanzania as well as some tribes of Sudan. Speke, a European explorer who first suggested the hypothesis of Ethiopian origin, described the Hima as a "superior race" and linked them to the Tutsi.⁵⁵ In his view, the Hima and the Galla (of southern Ethiopia) shared a common, semi-semitic, semi-hamitic origin.⁵⁶ Oscar Baumann, an Austrian and the first European to live in Rwanda⁵⁷ also situated the origin of the Tutsi in the interlacustrine region of Abyssinia. He noted their

⁵³ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 49.

⁵⁴ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁵ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 52.

⁵⁶ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 56.

⁵⁷ Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", unpublished PhD dissertation, Edinburgh University in 1998, Chapter 1, p.2.

resemblance with Galla people and suggested that they immigrated to Rwanda around a thousand years ago.⁵⁸

The Hutu of Rwanda are commonly classified as part of the Bantu peoples. According to Mulinda, writers disagree and advance divergent theories concerning their place of origin prior to their settling in Rwanda. He notes that, some suggest that they may have come from western part of Uganda, Northwest Africa and Oceania.⁵⁹

The third group is the Twa. Mulinda remarks that the Twa of Rwanda are commonly classified in the family of Aborigines of the African continent, who occupied the forests of central and southern Africa.⁶⁰ Because of their undersized body, the Twa of Rwanda are widely seen as pygmies.

As noted in Chapter One, prior to the arrival of Europeans, the Rwandans had explained through myths how they had a common origin but earlier writers completely ignored these myths.⁶¹ Without giving convincing evidence in support of their claims, missionaries, colonizers and others who agreed with them seem to have made the Rwandans strangers in their own land.⁶² Writers such as Kagame and Marcel d'Hertefelt suggested that the Tutsi were the last group to arrive in Rwanda after the Twa and the Hutu respectively. Hertefelt called their arrival a conquest which he situated in the 13th century,⁶³ while Kagame places their arrival shortly before the 11th century.⁶⁴ The theories about the origin and arrival in Rwanda of the three ethnic groups became part of the Rwandan education system; people learnt and believed them. This is a key point in understanding the roots of the Rwandan crisis. As a result of the above theories, the Tutsi were considered "alien" while the Hutu were regarded as indigenous. Mahmood Mamdani argues that:

The origin of 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

⁵⁸ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 56.

⁵⁹ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 58.

⁶⁰ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 60.

⁶¹ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 60.

⁶² Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 60.

⁶³ Jean Paul Kimonyo, "La Relation Identaire Hutu/Tutsi", 2002, p. 69.

⁶⁴ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 63.

Tutsi, I argue, is connected with the failure of the Rwandan nationalism to transcend the colonial construction of Hutu and Tutsi as native and alien.⁶⁵

The theories of arrivals have weaknesses as Jean Paul Kimonyo has observed,

Le principal problème sur lequel butent ces auteurs (...) qui donnent une date récente à l'arrivée des Tutsi (autour du XIII^e et XIV^e siècles), est d'expliquer comment ce groupe a perdu toute trace de sa culture antérieure et notamment de sa langue. La question se pose avec plus d'acuité pour ceux d'entre eux qui professent une prémise de la supériorité tutsi, car on ne voit pas comment un groupe dominant en un laps de temps aussi court perdrait sa culture pour adopter intégralement la culture bantu du groupe dominé.⁶⁶

Authors who suggest a recent arrival of the Tutsi (around the 13th and 14th centuries) face one main problem, which is to explain how this group lost all elements of its original culture and particularly its language. Moreover, for those who attribute this to Tutsi superiority, the challenge is to explain how in that short time, such a dominant group could lose its culture and wholly adopt the Bantu culture of the dominated group.

Theories about the origin of Rwandan "ethnic" groups seem to raise more questions than answers. The Europeans used them in an attempt to understand the Rwandan traditional society but as time went by they became a weapon which divided the Rwandans along political, economical, social, and spiritual lines with devastating effects in 1994.

2. 3. The socio-economic organization of Rwandan society

Before focusing on the socio-economic organization of pre-colonial Rwanda, it is worthy of note to mention that early writers (most if not all) of the history of Rwanda were to a considerable degree convinced that the Twa, the Hutu and the Tutsi, although living in Rwanda for many centuries, might have originated from other places.

It is also important to note that by assuming that the Rwandans might have originated outside their current country, these early scholars seemed to have paid little attention to the question of the dates and motives of their exodus towards Rwanda. Indeed, we are not told for instance from which part of Egypt or Abyssinia the Tutsi came from,

⁶⁵ Mahmood Mamdani, *When victims become killers: colonialism, nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Jean Paul Kimonyo, "La Relation Identaire Hutu/Tutsi", p. 70.

or whether the causes of their migration to Rwanda were war, famine, or search for pastures or water.⁶⁷

However, if indeed these three social groups of Rwandan population initially originated from different places, then they would have different socio-economic organizations. This perspective is suggested in the UNESCO General History of Africa where the authors argue that:

The first inhabitants were Batwa who were hunters, potters and baskets-makers. From the Bantu speaking agriculturalists who arrived after them they received, for example, millet, honey, cattle, iron goods and salt, giving them in return animals skins, meat, baskets etc. By the fifteenth century, many of the Bantu-speakers were organized into small states controlled by the ruling lineage of the chief or king (*mwami*) who was both a land chief and a ritual leader. Some, such as the Singa and Zigaba clans, possessed cattle before the arrival of the Nyiginya clan. According to Tutsi traditions, the oldest of them was established by the Renge lineages of the Singa clan. By the sixteenth century, they had a complex ritual kingship with a body of ritual experts known as Tege. Gihanga, the founder of the Tutsi clans, is supposed to have adopted the idea of the royal drum and the ritual code of royalty from their ancestor Nyabutege.⁶⁸

Kagame and Pagès also support the view that initially the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa had different socio-economic organizations. According to Kagame, the Twa (pygmies) were the first ethnic group to have inhabited the present territory of Rwanda.⁶⁹ In his view, the Twa occupied vast forests and lived in small family groups following a common ancestor. They demarcated the forests in what Kagame calls *Districts de chasse*⁷⁰ (Hunting districts). Their socio-economic situation has known little change compared to the other ethnic groups. The Twa were and still are marginalized and stigmatized by other ethnic groups and they have never been involved in the governance of the country, either before or after colonization. Their contribution to the socio-economic life of the country is also meager. The population of the Twa comprises approximately 1% of the total population of Rwanda.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 57.

⁶⁸ J. Ki-Zerbo and D.T. Niane (eds.), *General History of Africa IV Africa: from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century* (Abridged Edition), California: James Currey, 1997, p. 207.

⁶⁹ Kagame Alexis, *Un abrégé de l'éthno-histoire du Rwanda*, Butare: Editions Universtaire du Rwanda, 1972, p. 22.

⁷⁰ Kagame Alexis, *Un abrégé de l'éthno-histoire du Rwanda*, p. 22.

⁷¹ Kagame Alexis, *Un abrégé de l'éthno-histoire du Rwanda*, p. 19.

According to Pagès, the Twa do not farm and scorn any farm-related work. He divided them into two categories, potters and hunters. The former lived on the periphery of Hutu villages. Until recent times other groups (Hutu and Tutsi) had neglected the art of pottery. The hunters preferred the solitary life of the forests.⁷² They cherished the forest and survived on elephants, buffalos, and antelopes. Some of their prey however, like the big tailless rat made them impure in the eyes of the other groups.⁷³ But Pagès has remarked that, the products of the forests were not enough to ensure their survival. They therefore raided farms of their Hutu neighbors or kidnapped those who passed through their territories for ransom. The European authorities brought to end this practice and compelled the Twa to change their life style. From Pagès' perspective, the Twa have long passed the "*stade de la cueillette*"⁷⁴ (the gathering stage).

Kagame and Pagès, described the Hutu as having been mainly agriculturalists. The Hutu also lived in small family groups, but unlike the Twa, the Hutu had a patriarch, locally known as *Umwami* (King). He reigned over a group of blood related people. Cohesion and harmony in the group depended solely on this blood relationship.⁷⁵

Concerning the Tutsi, Kagame and Pagès argue that they were pastoralists. The Tutsi were exclusively cattle keepers. Pagès remarks that for them "a cow counts more than any thing else", (*pour eux, la vache prime tout*).⁷⁶ Indeed, having many cows guaranteed the owner honor and respect in the society and ensured a happy life. The relationship between Tutsi and their cattle was so strong⁷⁷ that Pagès observes that one may be tempted to believe that there was religious veneration.⁷⁸

Like the Hutu and the Twa, the Tutsi were organized in family groups. Among such groups Kagame cites the group of *Abarenge* whose name is derived from the name of their ancestor and founder of their dynasty, Rurenge. Traditions say that these people

⁷² Following the rapid deforestation of Rwanda and the arrival of Europeans, the Twa were gradually obliged to abandon forest life and join others in the village, although at distance. Despite efforts to get them involved in socio-economical and political life of the Rwandan society, they have always been outsiders particularly to the political arena.

⁷³ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁴ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, p. 36.

⁷⁵ Ministère de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, *Introduction à l'histoire du Rwanda*, Tome I, Kigali: Imprimerie Nationale du Rwanda, 1987, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, p. 31.

⁷⁷ They gave their cows names; they knew them well in terms of sicknesses and treatments.

⁷⁸ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, p. 31.

were well equipped with tools such as ploughs and hammers which they used to dig wells for their cattle. They might have settled in Rwanda before the arrival of the founders of *Abanyiginya* dynasty, another group whose origin, myths say, was celestial. There were also other groups namely *Abongera*, *Abanengwe*, *Abarenge*, *Ababanda* and *Abazigaba*. They lived in different parts of the country; and traces of their earlier life in family groups can be seen in Rwandan society today.⁷⁹

Kagame has challenged authors like, Pagès⁸⁰ who asserted that the Tutsi invaded Rwanda. In his view, to say that the Tutsi invaded the territory would in other words mean that they came in as a well-organized people invading a country of their choice.⁸¹

Moreover, questions have been raised about the use of terms like “agriculturalists” and “pastoralists” in relation to the Hutu and the Tutsi as reflected in the following comment.

The terms “pastoralists” and “agriculturalists” are occupational and not ethnic terms; they refer to ways of life; when pastoralists lost their cattle they became agriculturalists, and vice versa.⁸²

The pre-colonial Rwanda was an absolute monarchy and the Twa, the Hutu and the Tutsi were all part and parcel of that kingdom. The King locally known as *Umwami* was chosen from the Tutsi and his power was unlimited and hereditary. The symbol of his power was a famous tambourine called *Kalinga* a highly sacred object. As in other kingdoms in Africa, the Rwandan King had the right of life and death over his subjects. Everything belonged to him: people, land, and animals. He himself always nominated other dignitaries and rulers from the Tutsi group. What brought the Twa, the Tutsi and the Hutu together to form one united society?

Authors such as Dr. Hiernaux, J. Pagès, suggests that the Tutsi conquered and subdued other groups. According to Pagès, to achieve their ends the Tutsi used every available means of violence, ruse and diplomacy.⁸³ On the other hand, Hiernaux

⁷⁹ Kagame Alexis, *Un abrégé de l'éthno-histoire du Rwanda*, pp.27-8.

⁸⁰ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, p. 37.

⁸¹ Kagame Alexis, *Un abrégé de l'éthno-histoire du Rwanda*, p. 27.

⁸² J. Ki-Zerbo and D.T. Niane (eds.), *General History of Africa IV*, p. 199.

⁸³ Charles, Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 65.

suggested that the Tutsi used their cows to conquer the Hutu through the institution of *Ubuhake*.⁸⁴

Although Kagame does not deny the role of the cow in the ancient Rwandan society, he nevertheless argues that it is unlikely that the Tutsi only used the *Ubuhake* system to conquer the Hutu, as there were other means of acquiring cows through gifts from friends or dowries. In his attempt to explain the total Tutsi domination of the Rwandan society Pagès argues that,

Les Banyarwanda appartiennent au type de sociétés " plus hiérarchisées, caractérisées par la constitution d'un pouvoir central dont les ordres, obligatoires par eux-mêmes, sont transmis jusqu'aux plus humbles individus par une série continue de chefs subalterns". Ce régime fut la conséquence de l'invasion et de la conquête du Rwanda par les Hamites. Le système monarchique fut introduit par eux pour " maintenir par un réseau administratif très ferme les populations assujetties."⁸⁵

The Rwandan society is one of the "most hierarchical with a central authority whose orders are transmitted to the grass roots through a chain of sub-chiefs. This system was the consequence of the invasion and conquest of Rwanda by the Hamites. They introduced the monarchic system as a means of "ensuring the subjection of the populations through a tight administrative network."

Early writers of the history of Rwanda like Kagame, Pagès, Léon Classe and anthropologists such as J.J. Maquet and Luc de Heusch propose several theories concerning the social organization of the Rwandans. Other writers however have criticized their theories and one of the defects found in them is that there is a tendency to give much prominence to the ruling class at the expense of other groups namely the Hutu and the Twa. Ki-Zerbo for example observes, "This history is heavily focused on dynasties and courts from the time of the ancestor Gihanga, leaving the mass of the people out of the picture."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ "Ubuhake" was a common system in the traditional Rwandan society whereby a person (in most cases, a poor Hutu without cows) served a noble person (a Tutsi) and acquired cows in return. According to Kagame, the master could even reclaim his cows if he was not satisfied with the services.

⁸⁵ Albert Pagès, *Un royaume hamite au centre de l'Afrique*, p. 37 as citing Pinard De la Boulaye, S.J., *Les relations entre l'évolution sociale et l'évolution religieuse* (CORRESPONDANT, 25 Janvier 1929).

⁸⁶ J. Ki-Zerbo, D.T. Niane (eds.), *General History of Africa IV*, p. 206.

Maniragaba, states that that before the arrival of Europeans in Rwanda, people identified themselves not by ethnic group or races which were unknown to them but by the clan.⁸⁷ In the same line of thought, Tharcisse Gatwa argues that:

There has been unanimity among the ethno-historians that the clan was far the most important social organization in pre-colonial society... scholars agree that the Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa constituted socio-classes. The presence of the three classes, Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa in each of the clans is one of the significant phenomena characterizing the Banyarwanda people.⁸⁸

Maniragaba, Gatwa and Hertefeldt disagree with Kagame who favored the concept of ethnicity. As Gatwa observes, the "ethnicizing" of the clans by ethnologists, including Kagame has been one of the major problems of Rwanda.⁸⁹ Gatwa further remarks that:

Kagame would argue that the clan was exclusively of Batutsi origin and that the presence in the clans of the Bahutu and Batwa, attested by all researchers, resulted from their assimilation with the Batutsi through social, economic and political relations. This appears to be a deliberate bias, twisting the concepts of Mututsi, Muhutu and Mutwa away from their primary socio-economic meaning to imbue them with a more political ideological signification.⁹⁰

Unlike Kagame, Hertefeldt suggested that the three social groups could mix in the same clan.⁹¹ The application of the concept of ethnicity in relation to the Twa, the Tutsi and the Hutu is a more or less recent political and ideological phenomenon.⁹²

Quoting Reyntjens, Gatwa observes that, the concept of Bahutu and Batutsi as antagonists was introduced for the first time in 1917 in the legislation by the Resident's circular letter 791/A/53 which took all the Batutsi for Lords and cattle owners and all the Bahutu for the subjects and agriculturalists.⁹³

According to Mulinda, people who belong to the same ethnic group share certain features of civilization such as languages and cultural values. From this perspective

⁸⁷ Maniragaba B., "Les Mythes de Fils de Gihanga ou l'Histoire d'une Fraternité Toujours Manquée" in Bangamwabo et al (eds.) *Les Relations Interethniques au Rwanda à la lumière de l'Aggression d'Octobre 1990* (Ruhengeri: Editions Universitaires, 1991), p. 98.

⁸⁸ Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", pp. 6-7.

⁸⁹ Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p.8.

⁹⁰ Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p.8.

⁹¹ D' Hertefeldt, M., *Les clans du Rwanda ancien*, Tervuren, MRAC, 1971, pp. 25 and 49 quoted in Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 53.

⁹² Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p.9.

⁹³ Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p.9 a s citing Reyntjens, F., *Pouvoir et Droit au Rwanda. Droit Public et Evolution Politique de 1916 à 1973* (Tervuren: MRAC, No 117, 1985, p. 31).

the people of Rwanda meet all the conditions of belonging to one ethnic group: Banyarwanda, for they share one language and one culture.⁹⁴ Mulinda seems to have agreed with Father Louis de Lacger who said “the Rwandans form one people, that of Banyarwanda who gave the name to the territory”.⁹⁵

Authors such as Gatwa, Mulinda, Sebasoni dispute the notion of ethnicity in relation to the Rwandan people on the basis of the commonalities of the Rwandan society namely one language and culture. There are among the Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa, numerous factors of integration which illustrate the absurdity of the definition of the Belgian concept of “ethnicity”.⁹⁶ According to Ian Linden,

The full ambiguity of the terms *Tutsi* and *Hutu* was revealed by the Belgian system of ethnic classification, in which *Tutsi* was defined as “a Banyarwanda with more than ten cows”.⁹⁷

In the light of the above observations, the concept of ethnicity was a recent development by the colonial administration; but for political reasons indigenous politicians accepted and used it to discriminate one another.

2.4. The establishment of colonial rule and Christianity in Rwanda

In this section, the relationships between the Rwandan traditional institutions and colonial forces as well as missionaries, with particular emphasis on the Catholic Church will be examined. Rwanda was unknown to the Arab and European adventurers until the last years of the 19th century.⁹⁸ However, in the last quarter of the 19th century, a considerable part of Africa was divided between European countries. This was done at the Berlin conference of 1884-85, called by the German chancellor Otto van Bismarck.⁹⁹ In 1890, Ruanda-Urundi¹⁰⁰ and Tanganyika became

⁹⁴ Charles Kabwete Mulinda, *La généalogie de l'idée du peuplement du Rwanda*, p. 53.

⁹⁵ De Lacger, L., *Ruanda*, Kabgayi, 1959, p. 36.

⁹⁶ Tharcisse Gatwa, “The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994”, p. 9.

⁹⁷ Ian Linden, “The Church and Genocide”, p. 43.

⁹⁸ Paul Rutayisire, “Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation” 1999, p.34.

⁹⁹ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, Suffolk: Highland Books, 1991, p. 27.

¹⁰⁰ Under colonial rule, Rwanda and Burundi were joined together as one country called Ruanda-Urundi, with the headquarters in Bujumbura (Burundi).

officially German East-Africa and remained that way until the First World War.¹⁰¹ At the end of the conflict, the Germans were forced to cede their East-African territories, and consequently Rwanda and Burundi (Ruanda-Urundi) became a Belgian mandated territory.

As in other parts of Africa, colonialists and missionaries arrived simultaneously in Rwanda and were in many ways close collaborators. After a rather cold reception of the Christian faith, the Rwandans converted in large numbers as a result of a wave of events that have marked the history of Christianity in Rwanda. First there was a massive conversion to Catholicism (1928-1934)¹⁰² in a movement called le *tornade* ("the hurricane").¹⁰³ Second, there was the East African Revival which started in 1936 at Gahini.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the missionary press presented Rwanda as a "nation chrétienne" (Christian nation), "royaume chrétien" (Christian kingdom) and even "république chrétienne" (Christian republic).¹⁰⁵

The Catholics, namely the White Fathers, were the first missionaries to establish mission stations in Rwanda. In 1899 they founded the mission of Save in the region of Bwanamukali. In November 1900, the mission of Zaza was founded by Rev. Barthelemy and in 1901, Nyundo mission was founded. Many more Catholic missions followed as years passed by.

After touring Rwanda and founding the first Catholic mission at Save, Bishop Hirth proposed a plan of occupation which the Catholic missionaries were to follow in establishing other mission stations in Rwanda. As Rutayisire observes, the plan aimed at occupying areas that were more populated, and also strategically important from a political as well as an economic point of view.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 28.

¹⁰² Paul Rutembesa, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation" p. 39.

¹⁰³ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ John Martin, "Rwanda: Why?" in *Transformation an International Evangelical Dialogue on Mission and Ethics* Vol. 12 No. 2 (April/June 1995) pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation," p. 39.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation," p. 34.

Rutayisire further points out that the above plan did not work because there was a constant distrust between the Catholic missionaries and the German colonial rulers for several reasons. First, both came from different religious confessions. The Catholic missionaries equated the German administrators with the Protestants. Second, they were of different nationalities: the first Catholic missionaries were mostly of French origin. Third, they had different political opinions. The political stand of the first Catholic missionaries differed from that of German colonial rulers.¹⁰⁷

After the First World War, when the Belgians had replaced the Germans in terms of governing Rwanda, the situation changed because the Catholic missionaries considered the Belgians as “natural allies” in the sense that they were from a “Catholic” country.¹⁰⁸

For instance, whenever the Catholic missionaries requested land for a mission station, their request was rarely rejected either by colonial authorities or indigenous authorities, while the demands by Protestants were systematically rejected.¹⁰⁹ Because of that close relationship between the Catholic missionaries and the Belgians, on the eve of independence of Rwanda, the Catholic Church overwhelmingly dominated the country through establishment of schools, missions stations, while only a handful of places were left to Protestants.

The missionaries from the Bethel Mission were the second to arrive in Rwanda and were the eventual founders of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda.¹¹⁰ The idea of sending them to Rwanda came soon after the Berlin Conference when the German authorities realized that there was no missionary organization in the Congo or Ruanda-Urundi which could engage in the “civilizing” task that Christian missions- Roman Catholic and Protestant-were undertaking in other colonial territories.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Paul Rutayisire, “Le Remodelage de l’Espace culturel rwandais par l’Eglise et la Colonisation,” p. 36.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Rutayisire, “Le Remodelage de l’Espace culturel rwandais par l’Eglise et la Colonisation,” p. 36.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Rutayisire, “Le Remodelage de l’Espace culturel rwandais par l’Eglise et la Colonisation,” p. 35.

¹¹⁰ Tharcisse Gatwa, “The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994”, introduction, p. 4.

¹¹¹ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 31.

In 1886, the German Evangelical Missionary Society for East Africa (*Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Ost-afrika*) was formed. Osborn remarks that, the spiritual drive of this mission was derived from its links with the “House of Deaconesses of Bethel” and hence its activities were often referred to as those of the “Bethel Mission.”¹¹² The first missionaries from the Bethel Mission entered Rwanda from Tanganyika in 1907 and set up the first Protestant missionary post at Zinga, near Lake Muhazi.¹¹³ On 28th August 1907, the first Protestant Mission station was opened at Kirinda, near Nyanza, the residence of the King Yuhi Musinga.

After the Bethel Mission the Anglicans arrived. In early 1920s, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) sought and obtained permission from the Belgian officials and the King Yuhi Musinga to send the first Anglican missionaries to Rwanda. In 1925 Ex-Army Captain, Geoff Holms arrived in Rwanda and established the first Anglican mission in Rwanda at a hilly site called Gahini in the northeastern part of Rwanda.¹¹⁴ Six years later, in 1931, Kigeme and Shyira Anglican mission stations were established.

Other protestant missions, namely the Baptists and Methodists, were later established in Rwanda but like other protestant missionaries who had arrived before them, they in general had little impact, if at all, on the political landscape of Rwanda. Moreover Protestant missionaries had less harmonious relationships with their Catholic counterparts.

In this regard for instance early Anglican missionaries identified “witchcraft” and “the Roman Catholic Church” as enemies to the establishment of the Anglican Church in Rwanda.¹¹⁵ Osborn further remarks that, it is sad to record that, at that time, the Roman Catholic Church proved to be more hostile. The Belgian Roman Catholic government gave the missions of that church overwhelmingly preferential treatment and the church used that advantage to the full.¹¹⁶

¹¹² H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 31.

¹¹³ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 49.

¹¹⁵ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 47.

¹¹⁶ H.H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, p. 48.

Although the Catholic missionaries were not directly involved in political or economic matters of Rwanda, they were consulted and their views were taken into consideration.¹¹⁷ For example in 1928, the Catholic missionaries took an active role in re-structuring the traditional system of administration.¹¹⁸ The colonial government created chieftaincy and sub-chieftaincy in place of three traditional *batware* (one for the cattle, one for land and one for army). This reorganization resulted in total domination of territorial administration by the Tutsi.¹¹⁹ In this exercise of restructuring traditional institutions, Bishop Classe chose his allies among the Tutsi whom he considered more active and hence capable of persuading the masses to join the Catholic Church.¹²⁰ Having been impressed by the "aristocracy Tutsi"¹²¹ and the complex organization of the Kingdom of Rwanda, the colonizers also made an alliance with them.

The situation remained like that until the 1950s.¹²² This is seen by many as one of the many causes of inter-ethnic strife that has marked Rwanda since 1959. At first, the Belgians and the Catholic missionaries treated the Tutsi preferentially, in other words any measure they took tended to be discriminatory against the Hutu.¹²³

But this honeymoon between the "aristocracy Tutsi" and the Europeans (colonizers and Catholics missionaries) was short lived, because both the colonizers and the missionaries desacralized the authority of the Rwandan monarch and deprived him of his respect.¹²⁴ Before 1925, the King, (Yuhi Musinga) was considered to be anti-Belgian, in other words against the colonial rulers. People close to him confirmed it, but he was not anti-missionary as noted by Bishop Classe in his letter of 10th March

¹¹⁷ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 36.

¹¹⁸ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 36.

¹¹⁹ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 36.

¹²⁰ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 37.

¹²¹ Jean Paul Kimonyo, "La Relation Identitaire Hutu/Tutsi", p. 66.

¹²² Jean Paul Kimonyo, "La Relation Identaire Hutu/Tutsi," p.66.

¹²³ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 36.

¹²⁴ Tharcisse, Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p.5.

1923.¹²⁵ The hostile behavior of the King towards the Belgians was caused by the policy of the latter to undermine his authority. As a way of weakening the monarch, they attacked and weakened his entourage by driving many of his close advisers into exile. The first victim was Umwiru Gashamura who was exiled to Burundi in March 1925.¹²⁶ The refusal of the King to collaborate with Europeans resulted in colonial government sanctions against him. The Catholics, namely Bishop Classe, encouraged the colonizers to impose sanctions against the monarch.¹²⁷ He openly demanded the deportation of Yuhi Musinga. Bishop Classe had constantly spoken of Yuhi Musinga's "anti-catholic radicalism" especially since 1927.¹²⁸

For several decades the Rwandans resisted the Catholic missions.¹²⁹ Although the monarch remained attached to his traditional beliefs, according to those who were close to him; in the last years of his reign he was no longer an obstacle to those who wanted to be baptized.¹³⁰

In 1931, the colonial authority acted on their dissatisfaction with the monarch (Yuhi Musinga) and forced him out of his kingdom. His people could do nothing to stop it and hopelessly watched events unfolding. Traditional institutions were discredited and rendered useless, socially.¹³¹ Mutara Rudahigwa replaced his father Musinga, and the missionaries celebrated the event as an important step towards a "modern and Christian Kingdom of Rwanda".¹³² The Rwandan monarchy remained in place but its function had completely changed following the restructuring outlined above and imposed by the colonial masters and missionaries. By the time Musinga was dethroned he was no longer governing as the colonizers and missionaries had isolated

¹²⁵ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 47.

¹²⁶ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 47.

¹²⁷ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 47.

¹²⁸ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 47.

¹²⁹ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 43.

¹³⁰ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 47.

¹³¹ Servilien Sebasoni. *Les Origines du Rwanda*, Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, S.A., 1996, p. 136.

¹³² L. de Lacger, *Ruanda, Kabgayi*, 1957, p. 533, quoted by Paul, Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 49.

him.¹³³ The 1950s marked the beginning of a dramatic change in the relationships between the Tutsi and the Belgian colonizers and the Catholic missionaries.

The Hutu saw themselves as a marginalized group; numerically they formed the largest group yet the minority Tutsi dominated them. Nevertheless, the Hutu knew that they could count on powerful allies to end the Tutsi domination. The colonizers and the Catholic leaders joined the Hutu cause.¹³⁴ The Hutu cause became a growing tidal wave, and the church and the colonial rulers became convinced that their interests would best be protected in the society if the Hutu would be in power.¹³⁵ The Catholics shifted their support from the Tutsi to the Hutu. As Gatwa observes, "Surprisingly, the former defenders of the Hamite theory, the colonial rulers and the Catholic Church were converted to the Bahutu cause."¹³⁶

During the period leading to the independence of Rwanda in 1962, Bishop Perraudin (Catholic) sought support from the movements of extremist Hutu, whom he considered to be the best supporters of the Church.¹³⁷ The 1950s were also marked by emergence of political parties based primarily on ethnic interests. Among them were, Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR¹³⁸), Association pour la Promotion de la Masse (APROSOMA¹³⁹), Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais (RADER¹⁴⁰), and Parti du Mouvement de L'Emancipation Hutu (PARMEHUTU¹⁴¹).

In 1959, the sudden death of King Mutara Rudahigwa in Bujumbura (Burundi) in rather suspicious circumstances proved in many ways to be the decisive phase of the downfall of the Tutsi reign. His successor, Kigeli Ndahindurwa sat on his throne for a short time because the first inter-ethnic clash occurred soon after his coronation. Many writers have suggested that the colonizers as well as the Catholic church played a key

¹³³ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 49.

¹³⁴ Servilien Sebasoni, *Les origines du Rwanda*, p.131.

¹³⁵ Servilien Sebasoni, *Les Origines du Rwanda*, p. 131.

¹³⁶ Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethics Ideology in the Rwanda Crises 1900-1994", introduction, p.3.

¹³⁷ Paul Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la Colonisation", p. 37.

¹³⁸ Rwandan National Union (pro-monarchy and often associated with Tutsi).

¹³⁹ Social Association for Mass Promotion. (Associated with the Hutu cause).

¹⁴⁰ Rwandan Democratic Assembling. (Associated with the Tutsi interests).

¹⁴¹ Movement Parity of Hutu Emancipation. (The leading Hutu political parity).

role in the events of 1959, which marked a turning point in the history of Rwanda.

Gatwa remarks that,

These combined actions generated the 1959 social revolution which initiated Hutu rule and, at the same time, left Rwandan society even more fractured.¹⁴²

The social revolution of 1959 resulted in the flight of a large number of Tutsi and a few years later Rwanda obtained its independence from the Belgians under the Hutu leadership on 1st July 1962.¹⁴³ Since the 1959 social revolution, through the regimes of Grégoire Kayibanda and Juvénal Habyarimana, the church, especially the Catholic Church,¹⁴⁴ became a determining social factor. First there was the role played by Bishop Perraudin in supporting the Hutu cause. Linden notes that:

Later, the social Catholicism of the postwar Belgian clergy and the Swiss Archbishop of Kabgayi, Perraudin, was taken up by the Hutu counter-elite, who saw in it an ideological weapon to emancipate the Hutu majority.¹⁴⁵

Second, the Archbishop of Kigali, Vincent Nsengiyumva who not only had close relationships with President Habyarimana, also became involved in politics:

The most egregious example is that of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kigali, Vincent Nsengiyumva, who had become a member of the central committee of the MRND in the mid-1970s and was confessor to Habyarimana's wife. He certainly moved in the circle of the hard-line fanatical anti-Tutsi clique around Habyarimana.¹⁴⁶

By early 1990, the dominance of the Catholic Church by the Hutu was clear. Only two of the country's eight bishops were Tutsi.¹⁴⁷ But the Tutsi had also their share of dominance particularly in the church's intellectual establishment in 1970s. Even in the 1990s the Tutsi still were the majority among the intellectuals and in catholic priesthood.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Tharcisse Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethics Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", introduction, p. 3.

¹⁴³ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 43.

¹⁴⁴ According to Ian Linden, in 1994 about 90% of the population were Christians of one denomination or another, with 62 percent baptized Catholics.

¹⁴⁵ Ian, Linden "The Church and Genocide", p. 51.

¹⁴⁶ Ian Linden "The Church and Genocide", p. 50.

¹⁴⁷ Ian Linden "The Church and Genocide", P. 51.

¹⁴⁸ Ian Linden "The Church and Genocide", p. 51.

All in all, the Catholic Church was in the thick of action in all social and political changes Rwanda experienced after the arrival of Europeans particularly after the departure of the Germans. Unlike the Catholics, the Protestants had little say, if any, in whatever was happening in Rwanda as they concentrated most of their efforts in securing places to establish their missions.

2.5. Rwanda since Independence

After independence, the Hutu leaders took and monopolized power. For the Hutu, the end of the monarchy was in many ways equated with a removal of a Tutsi yoke from their shoulders. Thus, the 1959 social revolution was seen as a step towards the recreation¹⁴⁹ of Rwanda. New terms such as *rubanda nyamwinshi* (majority people) and *bene gihugu*¹⁵⁰ (heirs of the land) were developed and they helped the Hutu leaders to rally the mass behind their cause as well as suppressing any divergent ideas.

Since 1965, PARMEHUTU led by Grégoire Kayibanda, the first president of the Republic of Rwanda, and a former seminarian,¹⁵¹ became the sole political party,¹⁵² which monopolized power and crushed the opposition from both the Hutu and the Tutsi. As J. P. Chrétien has observed, Kayibanda became more than ever the incarnation of Hutu sovereignty, the source of national legitimacy, and the referee in the distribution of functions.¹⁵³ The Tutsi, former rulers of Rwanda, became enemy number one of the new leaders. As Rutembesa remarks, the Tutsi people and their views became synonymous with what was diverging from the Hutu government policies meaning that the Tutsi were perceived as a kind of enemy endangering the existence of the Hutu.¹⁵⁴ The anti-Tutsi sentiments grew stronger as the Tutsi were often portrayed as sly, bloodthirsty people, plotting to take power and a threat to the unity and existence of the Hutu.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 119.

¹⁵⁰ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 119.

¹⁵¹ Servilien Sebasoni, *Les Origines du Rwanda*, p. 132.

¹⁵² Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 113.

¹⁵³ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 113.

¹⁵⁴ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 108.

¹⁵⁵ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 120.

In the 1960s,¹⁵⁶ the Tutsi who were refugees in the neighbouring countries attempted through sporadic raids to regain power. Their efforts however only increased Hutu hatred towards them and served as a pretext for more massacres of the Tutsi who had remained in Rwanda. This resulted in creating new waves of refugees.¹⁵⁷ Even after independence, ethnic tension coupled with regional tension characterized local politics. Ian Linden remarks that:

Since that time, capture of the Rwandan state from political opponents has been a violent game in which winner takes all. Political parties with mainly regional roots have intermittently attempted to wrap themselves in national colors as the ethnic blind party of the Banyarwanda. The absence of the *mwami*, who was seen not as an elevated Tutsi noble but as unifying symbol above the ethnic and political fray, made this more difficult.¹⁵⁸

The ensuing turmoil paved the way for Juvénal Habyarimana to instigate a coup d'état on 5th July 1973 in which he overthrew the regime of Grégoire Kayibanda. In his first declarations Habyarimana promised a "reign" of peace, justice, and national reconciliation.¹⁵⁹ By the 1980s his rule was carried out by a narrow Gisenyi-centered clique.¹⁶⁰ Rwanda had made significant improvement in its economic conditions during early 1980s.¹⁶¹ However, in addition to political problems, the regime of Habyarimana experienced other problems, namely economic decline in the late 1980s.

Linden outlined four factors which contributed to the predicament of many African countries economies including the Rwandan economy in the 1980s:

First, they have meager possibilities for export, usually one or two cash crops (in the case of Rwanda, coffee), whose value dropped drastically in world markets after 1987. Second, during the 1980s many saw their national debt rise; Rwanda's rose from \$ 189 million to \$ 844 million, and some twenty other countries clocked in behind Rwanda in the U.N.'s classification of the poorest countries in the world. Third, like Rwanda, many were increasingly overpopulated, with huge populations of young men under twenty-five with no formal employment prospects. Fourth, several countries experienced annual declines of 2.4 percent in their economies during the 1980s and faced draconian structural adjustment programs.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 112.

¹⁵⁷ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 47.

¹⁵⁸ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 47.

¹⁵⁹ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda". p. 114.

¹⁶⁰ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 47.

¹⁶¹ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 45.

¹⁶² Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 45.

On top of the above problems, there was embezzlement of public funds, monopolization of all advantages by a small fraction of bourgeois from Gisenyi and Ruhengeri prefectures.¹⁶³ There was a rise in unemployment and rural poverty from 1990 to 1994.¹⁶⁴ Each time Rwanda passed through difficult times, issues of identity would be raised, unlike in good times, and ethnic discourses (reflecting anti-Tutsi sentiments) would be recomposed.¹⁶⁵

Politically, Habyarimana's regime was unsettled by the introduction of multiparty system in the early 1990s as well as the attack of Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel movement composed of mainly Tutsi refugees from Uganda. Indeed, on 1st October 1990, the Tutsi refugees from Uganda with some dissatisfied Hutu started fighting to return home¹⁶⁶ and to overthrow the regime of Juvenal Habyarimana. Afraid of losing power to the Tutsi, the Hutu government retaliated using every possible means. The anti-Tutsi sentiments resurfaced with vigor and were even propagated in the media.¹⁶⁷

Hutu politicians¹⁶⁸ seized the occasion and rallied their followers against the "invaders" (Tutsi). Even the young generation was introduced to the bitter rivalry which for the two previous decades seemed to have subsided. For many observers, however, the situation in Rwanda had every indication of exploding any time. The military success of the rebels in 1991-1992¹⁶⁹ only increased the anti-Tutsi sentiments from the Hutu hardliners such as Coalition pour la Défense de la République (C.D.R).¹⁷⁰

It was in this atmosphere of tension, distrust and uncertainty that on August 4th 1993 the government of Habyarimana and RPF concluded a peace agreement in Arusha,

¹⁶³ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 114-5.

¹⁶⁴ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 45.

¹⁶⁵ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p. 115-6.

¹⁶⁶ In 1982 Uganda drove Rwandan refugees to Rwanda but Habyarimana's government sent them back to Uganda.

¹⁶⁷ For example, the Journal Kangura and Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines played a key role in inciting people to murder.

¹⁶⁸ For example, in 1992 Léon Mugesera (Hutu politician) urged his followers to use a shortcut and send the Tutsi where they came from (Abyssinia). Two years later his call was answered as several hundreds of Tutsi were thrown into the River Nyabarongo which flows into the River Nile.

¹⁶⁹ Ian Linden, "The Church and Genocide", p. 46.

¹⁷⁰ Coalition for the Defense of the Republic.

Tanzania according to which there would be power sharing among the government of Habyarimana, political opposition within the country and the rebels. Thus to many analysts it was not surprising to see President Habyarimana dragging his feet over the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords.¹⁷¹

As many might have expected, the Arusha Peace Accord did not change much. On April the 6th 1994, the plane carrying President Habyarimana was shot¹⁷² down killing him and his entourage. During the one hundred days that followed that incident, Rwanda witnessed massacres of unprecedented scale which amounted to the genocide of the Tutsi. The national army alongside the Hutu militia, Interahamwe, the youth wing of Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (M.R.N.D),¹⁷³ the political party in power, systematically and indiscriminately hunted and killed the Tutsi and some moderate Hutu who were in the opposition. Very few escaped unharmed without an amputated limb or for the women without, for example, being raped.

2.6. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to analyze various factors, which form the background against which the April 1994 genocide took place in Rwanda. This chapter has also surveyed the geographical position and landscape of the country which played a significant role in the social, economic and political history of Rwanda it has also noted that, the rivers became part of genocide story. Theories about the possible places of origin and date of arrival in the country of the three ethnic groups that form the Rwandan population are perceived by many analysts as being key factors behind the ideology that led to the genocide of 1994. In this chapter, we have seen how, “ethnicity” is a recent concept in the history of Rwanda, introduced by the colonizers and missionaries for their own interests at the expense of the unity of the Rwandans. The three social groups: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa meet all the conditions to make up only one ethnic group: Abanyarwanda. Unfortunately, Rwandan politicians accepted and

¹⁷¹ Ian Linden, “The Church and Genocide”, p. 46.

¹⁷² No one so far has officially claimed the responsibility of shooting down the plane of President Habyarimana Juvénal.

¹⁷³ National Revolutionary Movement for Development.

used the notion of ethnicity for discriminatory measures until genocide occurred in 1994.

The arrival and establishment of Christianity at the beginning of the 20th century marked a turning point in the history of the country especially after the First World War, as church leaders, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, took a leading role alongside the Belgian authorities in shaping a political line which Rwanda followed over a half century. To many observers, the role of the Christian Church in the genocide can hardly be denied.

However, it would be unfair to brand all the actions of the colonizers and missionaries as negative. Among other things, they were the pioneers of the initiatives of translating African languages and cultures from oral to written forms.¹⁷⁴ The April 1994 genocide took place in a society professing to be Christian.

¹⁷⁴ Paul, Rutayisire, "Le Remodelage de l'Espace culturel rwandais par l'Eglise et la colonization", p. 51.

CHAPTER 3

THE PLIGHT OF GENOCIDE WIDOWS IN KIGALI-VILLE PROVINCE

3.0. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the plight of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville province. According to Mukanyirigira Consolée, the coordinator of Association des Veuves du Genocide (AVEGA¹⁷⁵ Agahozo¹⁷⁶), generally speaking the plight of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville is the same as that of other genocide widows in other parts of the country.¹⁷⁷ After the genocide, many survivors left the rural areas or other towns and came to Kigali city. Among many reasons why they chose to migrate to Kigali-Ville is that it is at the center of the country and it is the capital of Rwanda. Kigali City was, in the aftermath of the crisis, the safest place in Rwanda.

On April the 7th 2004, the international community joined the whole nation of Rwanda in commemorating the tenth anniversary of the genocide. In the past decade, local and international initiatives were undertaken to respond to numerous problems left behind by the horrific events of April 1994. Besides efforts of rebuilding, and assisting those who survived, studies were also done in order to understand the roots of genocide and in so doing many testimonies were documented. Indeed ten years after, the whole nation was coming to full realization that women and children (especially girls) suffered the most in the Rwandan genocide. It is assumed that, those involved in helping the survivors (in this case widows) know, at least in general terms, the plight of genocide widows, but as time goes by, more and more women (widows) are speaking out and their personal testimonies are firm evidence of how devastating genocide can be.

¹⁷⁵ Association of Widows of Genocide.

¹⁷⁶ The word *Agahozo* is derived from the verb *Guhoza* which means to comfort.

¹⁷⁷ Mukanyirigira Consolée, oral interview, April 27, 2004, Remera, Kigali-Ville.

For most genocide widows, life in their home areas was in many ways over and they needed a new start but not where they lost almost everything. Therefore, they were in need of urgent help and they were most likely to get it in Kigali City where they thought life would be easier.¹⁷⁸ There are also other widows who before April 1994 were living in Kigali City and have continued to live there even after the crisis.

Kigali City officially has a population of 800,000, one tenth of the whole population of Rwanda (8.1 million). According to association AVEGA Agahozo out of 25, 000 widows country wide, between 1300-1500¹⁷⁹ live in Kigali-Ville Province.

The data used in this chapter has been collected from different bodies involved in helping genocide widows namely, Christian NGOs and Churches, as well as genocide widows living in different parts of Kigali-Ville Province. The plight of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville Province will be examined from five perspectives: economic loss, personal and social relationships, bodily injuries, psychological damage and spiritual welfare.

3. 1. Economic loss

When people talk about genocide in Rwanda, they only focus on the massacre of thousands of innocent persons. The Rwandan crisis however had another aspect; the complete destruction of property, especially the property belonging to Tutsi victims. What happened in 1994 had also happened in 1959¹⁸⁰ but this time it was widespread and nothing was left untouched.

During the 1994 crisis, most of the victims left their homes and went to seek refuge in what they believed to be safer places such as churches, houses of friends and the bush. In the genocide not only were houses looted, but houses were also destroyed. When perpetrators had taken everything valuable such as television sets, radios, fridges, they made sure that houses were either knocked down or burnt and most of them were damaged beyond repair.

¹⁷⁸ Umutoni Brandine of Ibuka association, oral interview, August 2004, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁷⁹ Mukanyirigira Consolée, oral interview, April 27, 2004, Remera, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁸⁰ Faustin Rutembesa, "Ruptures culturelles et génocide au Rwanda", p.117.

Umuziga Agnes, a genocide widow living in Kanombe District, faced the ordeal of fleeing to the Democratic Republic of Congo where the killers of her husband had also sought refuge. When she came back home she found that everything was taken or destroyed. She says:

Njyewe n'abana tugarutse mu Rwanda twasanze ibyo twasize nta nakimwe kikirihho, byarasahuwe ndetse no mumurima ubwo tuba abakene gutyo, n'abana kujya kwiga byari ikibazo.¹⁸¹

When my children and I came back to Rwanda we found that everything we left behind was looted or destroyed, even crops in the farms. That is how my children and I became so poor to the extent that I could not even send them back to school.

Mukarwego Immaculée, a genocide widow living in Nyamirambo, was surprised by the wickedness behind the destruction of her family property:

Baduseneyeye inzu kuburyo n'ubutaka ngira ngo babwikoreye, ubwo n'Umugabo yari afite ivatiri nayo barayisahuye, mbese nta kintu na kimwe naramiye nta na kimwe.¹⁸²

They completely destroyed our house, to the extent I sometimes think that they even took the dust with them. They also looted the car of my husband; they have left me with absolutely nothing.

Esther Niyobuhungiro, a Genocide widow and a mother of three, counts herself lucky because one of their two houses somehow escaped being destroyed:

Njyewe navuga ko mfite umugisha ni nabyo nshimira Imana, kuko twari dufite inzu ehyili, basenya iyo mu cyaro basiga iyo mu mugi naho ibyo badusahuye sinashobora kubigarura, sinashobora kongera kubaho nka mbere kubera ko ibyo twakoraga turi bahiri sinabishobora ndi umwe, numva nshima Imana kuko iyo yo mu mugi batayishenye, niyo mbamo, njye nkaba mfite icumbi.¹⁸³

Personally I would say that I am fortunate and I thank God for that. We had two houses, and they destroyed one (in a rural area) and left one in town (Kigali). As for what they looted I cannot bring them back, and I will never live again the way I lived before because what we did when were two persons I cannot do it on my own. Nevertheless I thank God because I live in that house which was not destroyed, and unlike others I have a shelter.

¹⁸¹ Umuziga Agnes, oral interview, April 20, 2004, Busanza- Kanombe, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁸² Mukarwego Immaculée, oral interview, June 10, 2004, Kacyiru (Solace Ministries office), Kigali-Vile.

¹⁸³ Niyobuhungiro Esther, oral interview, June 21, 2004, Gikondo, Kigali-Ville.

Ten years after, shelter is still one of the major problems that genocide widows are facing; many still have no place they can call home.¹⁸⁴ It is worthy noting that the problem of shelter is even more serious for widows who moved to Kigali-Ville after the Genocide. This is because they now have to rent houses many for the first time in their lives, only this time without their husbands, without money and more importantly without the moral strength to face this new challenge.¹⁸⁵ Out of 18 genocide widows interviewed, 12 (67%) do not have their own houses and 11 of them (61%) moved to Kigali-Ville after genocide. Even those who have houses, many required major repairs. Indeed, according to a Christian Aid study on AVEGA, some of the houses had been rebuilt after the genocide by another NGO but they were not properly built and they were dangerous to live in as they were falling down.¹⁸⁶

Throughout the history of Rwanda, cows have been portrayed as a symbol of Tutsi invasion, conquest and social as well as political domination over the other two groups. Therefore, whenever Rwanda experienced ethnic clashes mainly between Hutu and Tutsi, cows were also targeted to wipe out the icon of Tutsi power and pride. In 1959, when the first real inter-ethnic clash occurred, cows were targeted but some raiders of Tutsi homes and farms preferred to keep some animals as their own, after chasing the majority of the Tutsi out of the country. In 1994 the same phenomenon was repeated, throughout the country, but this time the perpetrators were determined to slaughter all the cows belonging to the Tutsi. Other livestock were slaughtered and roasted as well including goats, sheep and even chicken.

According to Kayitaba Michel, the loss of livestock had a large impact on the economic and social life of genocide survivors including widows.¹⁸⁷ As in other African countries, livestock along side crops (mainly coffee, tea, fruits and vegetables) are the backbone of the welfare of many families. Cows, goats and sheep provide milk (mainly for children), meat, manure and constitute a major source of family income. The cow is still commonly regarded as a symbol of social relationships and pride by

¹⁸⁴ Mukanyirigira Consolée, oral interview, April 27, 2004, Remera, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁸⁵ Umutoni Brandine, oral interview, August 2004, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁸⁶ Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip report for Rwanda July 2003*, Kigali, p. 18.

¹⁸⁷ Kayitaba Michel, the Director of MOJCECORE oral interview, May 11, 2004, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

both ethnic groups and a cow is still a highly valued gift someone can receive from a friend or a friend's family.

Umutoni of the association Ibuka pointed out that when some genocide widows realized that they had lost all their livestock, they saw no point in continuing their lives in localities where they had lost every thing and so they decided to move to Kigali-Ville.¹⁸⁸ One informant¹⁸⁹ who moved to Kigali-Ville acknowledged that the loss of her cows (ten in total) was behind her decision to move to Kigali-Ville after the genocide:

Bamazeho ibyatumaga numva ndi umuntu mu bandi, umugabo wanjye n'imfura yanjye, yewe n'inka zanjye. Niyo, mpamvu nahisemo nnyewe n'udukobwa twanjye kwiyizira i Kigali, kubera ko ho ntazumva nshaka kworora ukundi. Naho umugabo wanjye n'imfura yanjye sinanabasimbura.¹⁹⁰

They destroyed all that made me a human being, my husband and my first born, even my cows. That is why I decided with my two surviving daughters to move to Kigali-Ville, because the style of life there will convince me that I cannot keep animals anymore. As for my husband and my son I cannot replace them any way.

A woman¹⁹¹ from Gitarama Province, was understandably shocked by the tragic death of her husband, but she was also dismayed at the loss of their livestock:

Hari igihe njya nibwira nti wenda nari kumva ibyo bakoze iyo baba barazijyanye bakaziyororera kuko wenda zari kubagirira akamaro kurushaho, nubwo nta n'impamvu zazibahaga mu byukuri. Ni ukuri, kuva icyo gihe numva ntashakaga kworora inka ukundi.¹⁹²

Sometimes I tell myself that I could have understood them if they kept them as their own animals, because I believe that they could have benefited more from them, although they don't really deserve it. Honestly since that time, I have lost all my interests in cows.

Mama Fils,¹⁹³ a mother of two daughters, believes that the killing of livestock was the climax of the genocide:

Njya nibwira ko nta kintu kibi nko kuza aho wita iwawe ugasanganirwa n'ibinonko by'inzu yawe, nta kintu kizima gitarabuka iruhande. Iyo ubonye ibyo nawe wibara mu bapfuye, yewe nta nubwo ubona icyo ubwira

¹⁸⁸ Umutoni Brandine, oral interview, August 2004, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁸⁹ She requested to remain anonymous.

¹⁹⁰ Oral interview, May 18, 2004, Nyarugenge, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁹¹ She requested to remain anonymous.

¹⁹² Oral interview, June 15, 2004, Nyarugenge, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁹³ Mama Fils is not her real name, she requested to remain anonymous.

umwana w'imyaka itanu cyangwa itandatu. Ndakubwiza ukuri ko ntari bwongere kuba aho hantu ukundi.¹⁹⁴

I think that there is nothing as bad as coming home and finding nothing but the rubble of what you used to call home, without a single living soul around. The moment you see it you count yourself among the dead as well, you don't even know how to console your own five or six year old children. Believe me there was no way I could live there again.

For the survivors of the 1959 crisis, the 1994 crisis was nothing but *déjà vu*. The new generation of the Rwandans however, cannot understand how people can hate one another so much so that even animals would be made to pay. Nevertheless, as they struggle to come to terms with that mystery, some have decided to change their life style from rural to urban life. Whether in rural or urban areas, nevertheless genocide widows were left in an economic mess. Poverty is a major constraint, which is weighing heavily upon the widows' abilities to reclaim their normal lives. They therefore need economic stability in order to move on with their lives as it has been suggested in the report of **African Rights Working for Justice**:

But unless they can find some economic security they will remain utterly dependant upon State or charitable interventions in every aspect of their lives. Not only does this destroy their confidence and self-esteem on a daily basis, it is profoundly insecure. As is evident from women's testimonies, direct financial assistance is at best intermittent and seeking it requires energy, awareness and even money for transport that the women lack. In this context, women are condemned to limp from one handout to the next, and sometimes have nothing to eat.¹⁹⁵

In the light of the above observation, what genocide widows need the most are the means and ways which will enable them to regain control of their lives and destiny. In other words there is need to help them to become directly responsible for the transformation of their predicament into a better situation.

3. 2. Bodily injuries

There is a popular Rwandan proverb, which says that, *Akamuga karuta agaturo* (an infirm person is better than a tomb). In normal circumstances these would be comforting words that one would expect from a friend or a concerned person. But, when you meet genocide survivors, hear their testimonies, see big scars on their faces

¹⁹⁴ Oral interview, July 12, 2004, Nyamirambo, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁹⁵ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p.5.

and necks, or see their look, it makes you question the relevance of the above words of wisdom in relation to them. According to the study done by the association AVEGA Agahozo, some of the effects resulting from physical assaults on women during genocide are unseen:

Parfois les séquelles ne sont pas visibles mais leur regard en dit long. Au premier abord elles sont réticentes pour se livrer au premier venu, mais au fur et à mesure qu'elles prennent confiance, elles deviennent volubiles et ont tendance à vouloir tout dire.¹⁹⁶

Sometimes the scars are not visible but their look says it all. At first they are reluctant to tell their stories to a stranger, but gradually as they gain confidence they become more open, and would usually want to tell everything.

Seeing Martha Mukandutiye¹⁹⁷ for the first time one would hardly notice any thing unusual because she looks normal and calm. But when she exposes serious injuries that she suffered on her head following heavy beating, one realizes how physically she was assaulted during the genocide: "As you see me I have been crippled in the chest and in the head; my head has been smashed"¹⁹⁸ (*ubu uko undeba ndi ikimuga mu gatuza no mu mutwe, nkubu nta mutwe mfite bakubisemo impiri*). She calmly told the researcher as she unveiled her head to show how badly it was damaged.

Mukarwego¹⁹⁹ was shot in the thigh and burnt with a burning tyre when she was dumped in a big hole with other victims. Like Martha, she looks calm and normal, but as she told the researcher, the scars that her body bears are a constant reminder of the agony she went through in 1994. During the genocide many women, young and old, were physically assaulted or tortured, but many are still silent about it. Indeed some survivors (widows in this case) are still wondering whether it would not have been better to die with the others than to survive with the physical blemish and pain. Moreover, according to the report of **African Rights Working for Justice**, during the genocide 31 women became pregnant as a result of rape.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ AVEGA Agahozo, *Etude sur les violences faites aux femmes au Rwanda*, Kigali: Mars 1999, p. 23.

¹⁹⁷ Martha Mukandutiye, oral interview, June 10, 2004, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

¹⁹⁸ Her attackers used *Impiri*, which is a kind of stick with a big head and some time nails are stuck on its head to make it deadlier.

¹⁹⁹ Mukarwego Immaculée, oral interview, June 10, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

²⁰⁰ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 6.

Needless to say, this also contributed to their misery both individually and socially as it has been pointed out in the report of **African Rights Working for Justice**:

Women suffered rape as an individual act of aggression against their person, but also, as an attack upon their community and identity. Some women express their belief that they should have died with their families. Many of them appear vulnerable to a sense of "survivor guilt," although it remains largely unspoken. Moreover, rape victims have faced negative reactions from own relatives and community, especially if their rape resulted in pregnancy.²⁰¹

Women who suffered physical assaults during the genocide were left with scars, amputated limbs or children in some cases of rape which are in so many ways a constant and sad reminder of what happened to them. The Rwandan crisis is similar to other civil crises witnessed on the African continent, in that women and children (mainly girls) suffered more than their male counterparts. They were beaten, tortured and they suffered the indignity of rape or gang rape in public, some in front of their husbands and children.

However, according to research by AVEGA Agahozo in March 1999, the violence against women has made the Rwandan genocide unique:

Le Génocide rwandais qui visait l'élimination physique de l'Ethnie Tutsi et qui, par ricochet, a emporté des Hutu, a eu la particularité d'avoir été particulièrement féroce envers ces femmes. Comme souligné plus haut, la violence contre les femmes faisant partie du plan du Génocide. La femme Tutsi a été un instrument privilégié dans la préparation du Génocide. Elle a été utilisée à la fois pour conscientiser les femmes et la jeunesse Hutu sur le suprématie des Hutu et sur la soit disante fourberie des Tutsi.²⁰²

The Rwandan genocide, which primarily aimed at the physical elimination of Tutsi which by ricocheting has carried away some Hutu, was particularly ruthless on these women since as mentioned above, the violence against women was part of the plan of genocide. The Tutsi woman has been a useful tool in the planning of genocide. She was used both to make the Hutu women and youth aware of the Hutu supremacy and of the so-called Tutsi deceit.

There was and still is a common belief in Rwanda today that Tutsi women are beautiful and elegant. Tutsi women in the past were unfortunately portrayed as nothing but sexual objects especially in Hutu circles regardless of their social or marital status.

²⁰¹ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 41.

²⁰² AVEGA Agahozo, *Etude sur les violences faites aux femmes au Rwanda*, p. 23-4.

The study done by AVEGA Agahozo connects in this regard:

Les femmes Tutsi ont tout d'abord été présentées comme des êtres maléfiques ayant le pouvoir de faire perdre la tête aux hommes pour les détourner de leur femmes. Le terme "IKIZUNGEREZI" qui signifie que les choses de la terre changent, a été détourné de sa signification réelle pour désigner **une femme qui fait perdre la tête aux hommes**, sous-entendu la femme Tutsi. Munie de ce pouvoir, la femme Tutsi a infiltré tous les milieux et plus particulièrement le milieu des ambassades étrangères au Rwanda, les ONGs et les organismes internationaux où elle occupe l'emploi qui aurait dû revenir à la femme Hutu dont le mari a été détourné de son domicile, de surcroît. Les propagandistes faisaient ainsi allusion aux dignitaires du régime qui, par diverses contraintes, avaient pris des femmes Tutsi comme "deuxième bureau".²⁰³

First and foremost Tutsi women have always been portrayed as evil with the power to make men crazy in order to take them away from their wives. The term "IKIZUNGEREZI" which means that the things of the world keep on changing, has been deviated from its real meaning to mean a **woman who makes men crazy**, implying of course a Tutsi woman. With this power, the Tutsi woman was able to force her way into all offices particularly in foreign embassies accredited in Rwanda, NGOs, and international organizations, where she occupied the post which the Hutu woman whose husband has been taken away from home should have taken. The propagandists were thus alluding to the dignitaries of the regime who, for various reasons, had taken Tutsi women as their mistresses.

This belief led to catastrophic consequences during the genocide. With this image in mind, some angry Hutu men from the notorious militia, *Interahamwe*, and some members of the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR²⁰⁴) chased Tutsi women and raped them. At first one may think that the rapists were most naturally driven by sexual impulse, though it could be partly true. But in this era of HIV/AIDS rape was considered as one of many strategies used to physically humiliate but more importantly to exterminate the Tutsi. Some Hutu who knew that they were HIV positive purposely raped Tutsi women²⁰⁵ in order to pass on the virus so that even if they survived the carnage they would eventually die of HIV/AIDS and the disease would have been transmitted to their husbands or children as well. Ben Kayumba of Solace Ministries confirms the above observations:

Bariya bicanyi bakoresheje indi ntwaro yo gufata abagore atari no kubera irari risanzwe, kuko hari igihe umuntu afata umwana w'umukobwa cyangwa se umugore kubera irari ariko muri Genocide turimo kugenda tubikoramo ubushakashatsi yari indi ntwaro y'ubwicanyi. Bafataga umuntu bazi neza ko yanduye akagenda afata abana n'abagore bagira bati nanakira

²⁰³ AVEGA Agahozo, *Etude sur les violences faites aux femmes au Rwanda*, p. 24.

²⁰⁴ Rwandan Armed Forces.

²⁰⁵ This conclusion has also been drawn in the study of Christian Aid on AVEGA members by Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip Report for Rwanda July 2003*, p. 18.

azapfa yishwe na Sida urumva iyo ni mwe mu ngengabitekerezo ya Genocide bakoresheje mu kugira nabi.²⁰⁶

The perpetrators of genocide used rape as a weapon not because of sexual lust, which under normal circumstances may drive a man to raping a girl or a woman. But genocide studies are now proving it; they took an HIV positive man and gave him the mission of going around raping girls and women so that even if they survive, they would finally die of HIV/AIDS. That was one of the strategies they used to commit atrocities.

Some widows were repeatedly gang raped and as a result they have suffered serious injuries (some permanent). Some for instance required vaginal repair, others had their uteruses removed. Mukarwego²⁰⁷ was gang raped by the militia *Interahamwe* for many weeks. As a result her uterus and one kidney were removed. On top of that she is also HIV/AIDS positive. According to the study done by Christian Aid, on the association AVEGA Agahozo, out of 25,000 widows registered with the Association country wide, 1225 widows were raped.²⁰⁸ According to the inquiry done by AVEGA between 17th November and 12th December 1998 in Kigali-Ville Province, 555²⁰⁹ widows were raped. Twelve out of eighteen interviewed genocide widows revealed that they were raped and are now HIV/AIDS positive. Only one of them was not gang raped. The exact figure of raped women is not yet known mainly because many victims are not yet willing to talk about it. According to **African Rights Working for Justice**, in a survey done in 2001 about 70 percent of 1125 members of the association AVEGA have tested HIV positive.²¹⁰ Women of all ages were attacked and victimized in the Rwandan genocide.

The African Rights working for Justice report states:

The youngest victim interviewed was just six in 1994, and the oldest was aged 71. Some were pregnant when raped and others became pregnant as a result. Many of the women were subject to repeated attacks. Moreover, rape was invariably one element in a succession of traumatic episodes, including other forms of abuse, terror, betrayal, bereavement and displacement.²¹¹

²⁰⁶ Ben Kayumba, oral interview, April 21, 2004, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

²⁰⁷ Mukarwego Immaculée, oral interview, June 10, 2004, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

²⁰⁸ Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip report for Rwanda July 2003*, p. 19.

²⁰⁹ This number is most likely to have gone up because more and more widows are revealing that they were sexually assaulted.

²¹⁰ African Rights working for Justice, April 2004, p. 69.

²¹¹ African Rights working for Justice, April 2004, p. 6.

In the aftermath of the genocide, the problem of widows who are HIV positive was not as serious as it is now eleven years later, because more and more women are discovering their HIV status. Some are dying while others are weakening following opportunistic infections such as Tuberculosis, respiratory infections and Malaria. Unfortunately their frail health is impacting hugely on their economic status on top of the social stigma that goes with HIV status. Widows with HIV/AIDS live with fear and feelings of powerlessness. They are constantly falling ill. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the rest of the raped women are any better off. Whether HIV positive, negative or simply unsure of their status, most victims of rape feel unwell whenever they are reminded of what they went through. Regardless of their HIV status they all live with little hope of better days ahead.

Although rape victims are advised to go for an HIV test so that they can at least know their status, the financial aspects of the test hamper many, considering that more than one test is needed to confirm one's HIV status. They particularly need transport to go to the right medical center. Faced with these hindrances many widows would prefer to live in uncertainty, because if they discover that they are HIV positive their situation would most likely worsen because of the stigma attached to HIV status and the fact that they may not have access to efficient treatment. There is no doubt, that even those widows who have broken the silence and openly talked about their plight, are only doing so out of frustration, and desperation, due to poverty and frail health.

As **African Rights Working for Justice** argues in their report:

Until women are given a real sense of hope, that by taking an HIV test they will access treatment and support, it is understandable that some prefer to remain in the dark about their HIV status.²¹²

In the light of the above remarks, for the victims of rape, whether HIV positive or negative, the agony goes on ten years after the genocide.

3. 3. Personal and social relationships

Since 1994, the international community has joined the whole nation of Rwanda in rebuilding the society, especially in helping the survivors to put the past behind and move on. The question is under which social terms? The Rwandan crisis has always

²¹² African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 35.

been understood as an ethnic conflict between the Hutu and the Tutsi, but in reality the crisis has had wide ranging social implications. The study done by Christian Aid on AVEGA notes that:

It must always be remembered that it is not as simple as Hutu vs Tutsi. There were many Hutus who were innocent and were in fact killed for being friends with Tutsis. It is only Hutu extremists who took part in the Genocide, and Hutus who were carried along out of fear and brainwashing.²¹³

All ethnic groups in Rwanda share one culture, one language, and same traditions. Inter-marriage between the Hutu and the Tutsi is frequent and for many this is what makes the interethnic strife in Rwanda hard to understand and makes the process of healing of the wounds difficult. Neighbours, relatives, in-laws and spouses rose against one another and in some cases children rose against parents and vice versa.

At the end of the conflict the whole society was left with serious social divisions and divided families. This resulted from an intense ideological campaign of sowing hatred and dehumanizing the "other ethnic group". Akwetery cited by Gacega observes that "ideology is critical to ethno-political mobilization because of its power to objectify human relations as a means of imposing hegemony by one group over another".²¹⁴ In the same line of thought, Lema cited by Gacega remarks that the end point of this process of "objectification" is to make one ethnic group feel superior and more human while other(s) appear inferior and dehumanized.²¹⁵ This indeed was the picture painted by the perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi.

Besides losing their husbands and the misery that goes with it, widows face a dilemma wondering which way forward especially as every one tends to suggest life has to go on. This is particularly so, for women who have married from a different ethnic group:

A Tutsi woman whose husband and family were Hutus may be hated by his family if they are extreme Hutus who were involved in the Genocide and if she has any remaining Tutsi family they may see her as a traitor or a threat. A Hutu woman who has married a Tutsi man, who has been killed, may be

²¹³ Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip report for Rwanda July 2003*, p. 18.

²¹⁴ Akwetery E. "Ghana: Violent Ethno-Political Conflicts and Democratic Challenge" in Laakso L. and Lukoshi A.O. (eds.) *Challenge to the Nation State in Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Uppsala, Sweden, 1996, cited by Margaret Gathoni Gacega, "Ethnic Conflicts And Their Impact on Women" in Mary N. Getui and Matthew M. Theuri (eds.) *Quests for Abundant Life in Africa*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1996, p. 164.

²¹⁵ Margaret Gathoni Gacega, "Ethnic Conflicts And Their Impact on Women" in Mary N. Getui and Matthew M. Theuri (eds.) *Quests for Abundant Life in Africa*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1996, p. 164.

hated by her husband's Tutsi family and also may be seen as a Hutu extremist.²¹⁶

However, it would be wrong to assume that widows who had married in the same ethnic group are any better off because in one way or another they would have to interact with other ethnic groups. The phrase for "genocide" in Kinyarwanda is *Itsemba tsemba n'itsembabwoko*,²¹⁷ and it implies that the survivors of the Rwandan massacres (widows in this case) were left with none or few family members and friends. According to Mukanyirigira, the coordinator of association AVEGA, this is what makes genocide widows different from others:

Icyambere abapfakazi ba genocide si nk'abandi basanzwe, ni babandi batagira umuryango. Nta baramu babo nta baramukazi babo tuzi ko genocide yaje ikukumba imaraho umuryango, uretse no kutagira aho bashatse ntibagira naho bavutse nta babyeyi babo nta musaza wabo mbese umupfakazi aba ari wenyine yakwibura akaba arapfuye.²¹⁸

First of all, genocide widows are no ordinary widows, they have no families. They have no brother or sister in-laws. Genocide came and exterminated families. Besides losing their in-laws, they have no parents, or brothers, in fact a genocide widow is lonely and when she cannot cope she is lost.

Béata of Solace Ministries, herself a widow from Nyanza (Butare Province), agrees with Mukanyirigira:

Uhundi rero icyo waburaga aho wavutse wajyaga aho washatse, ikintu cya mbere kibi ni ukubona usigaye wenyine noneho agahinda kawe ukabura uwo mugasangira.²¹⁹

Normally when you lose your blood family you go to your husband's family, but the sad thing is to see yourself left alone with no one to share your grief.

For most of the genocide widows, trouble came from where they least expected; long time friends, someone's former students or teacher, neighbours and in some cases in-laws.²²⁰

Mama Fils is still wondering about her future:

²¹⁶ Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip report for Rwanda July 2003*, p. 18.

²¹⁷ Literally the term means total extermination of an ethnic group.

²¹⁸ Mukanyirigira Consolée, oral interview, April 27, 2004, Remera- Kigali-Ville.

²¹⁹ Béata, oral interview, June 1, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

²²⁰ There are many cases of intermarriages between Hutu and Tutsi.

Abantu badukoreye ibi, ni abantu twaturanye imyaka myinshi turi inshuti dusangira byose n'abana bacu bafataga urugo rwabo nk'iwabo. None se ubu koko, tuzaba he cyangwa se tuzabaho gute, ngo twumve twongeye kwisanzura no kwizerana?²²¹

People, who did this to us, were our long time friends and neighbors, we shared everything and to our children their home was theirs too. Surely, how and where are we going to live and feel at peace with people again?

Though many Rwandans (not only Christians) seem to be compassionate and understanding and willing to help the genocide widows; the widows themselves do not know whom to trust or lean on for comfort and support. For many, the loss is not only of the dead but the living as well. This is because although many people surround them, genocide widows do not seem ready to embrace their presence and companionship.

3. 4. Psychological damage

After the genocide all widows were deeply traumatized, indeed, most were clinically depressed.²²² Eleven years on, notwithstanding massive efforts directed towards helping emotionally damaged survivors, many widows still need help. The degree of trauma varies from individual to individual depending on personal experiences during the genocide and the assistance received so far. There are of course many widows who would try as much as they can to hide their emotional disturbance, particularly rape victims, in an attempt to protect their social status.

According to **African Rights Working Justice** these women are suffering most:

Because the psychological impact of rape is more easily hidden than its physical effects, it is likely that women who do not come forward are the worst. It is widely agreed that the numbers of women who have spoken about what happened to them are few compared to the overall number of victims.²²³

Of all the widows the researcher interviewed, rape victims who unfortunately got infected with HIV/AIDS are more traumatized than others. On top of an unimaginable

²²¹ Oral interview, July 12, 2004, Nyamirambo- Kigali-Ville.

²²² African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 41.

²²³ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 41.

loss of their loved ones, they are living with tear, grief, uncertainty and a guilty conscience as if what happened to them was their own fault. They also get frustrated and disappointed especially when they cannot prove at least in legal terms that they were sexually attacked. Sometimes rape victims are more horrified when they see or hear their attackers justifying their actions by suggesting that the victims were somehow returning favors:

Rapists frequently insisted that they were "saving" women, by taking them as "wives". Some killers considered rape a profound torture and left women alive so that they would suffer enduring pain and loss. But a contrary view- that the victims of rape were fortunate to be spared- also prevails. On occasion women were offered a direct choice between death and rape, but even when they were not, they often feel confused emotions about their survival.²²⁴

Some widows have courageously stood up for their rights and went to testify in the court of law against those who raped them. But justice has not always gone their way, instead of seeing justice as a healing process they came out worse:

AVEGA has stopped encouraging women to go to the International Criminal Tribunal Court for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha after some of the women's terrible experiences. Promises to provide health care during the tribunal, anonymity, and sensitivity were all broken and women were made to repeat the most intimate details of rape in front of panels of all men, and of course there was the famous case when the three judges burst out laughing during one woman's testimony.²²⁵

In the face of the complexities of Rwandan society, the culture of silence and impunity, victims of rape are often left hopeless, defenseless and angry as they watch their attackers going free. Some widows have tried to get their attackers arrested but what they got in the end was more humiliation and pain. Kagirimpundu reported that she has severally seen the man who raped her repeatedly. She however does not know what course of action to take since it was ten years after the crime, few if any would believe her story:

Ni kenshi mpura nuwo mugabo wampemukiye mu muji agenda yidegembya, nkibaza icyo nakora nkakibura, hari ubwo njya nibwira nti se mvuze induru abantu bamufate, ariko nanone nkangira nti abantu baragira ngo nasaze.²²⁶

Quite often I come across the man who raped me walking freely in town and I wonder what to do, to get him arrested. Sometimes I tell myself that

²²⁴ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 41.

²²⁵ Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip report for Rwanda July 2003*, p. 18.

²²⁶ Kagirimpundu Jacqueline, oral interview, July 2004, Nyamirambo- Kigali-Ville.

perhaps I should scream so that people can come to my rescue, but again I realize that people would think that I am mad.

Whether rape victims get justice or not, whether they are young or old, HIV positive or not, or simply unsure of their HIV status, these widows are seriously disturbed. According to AVEGA Agahozo, 80 percent of raped women have suffered or do still suffer from trauma.²²⁷ They look bleak and deeply concerned about their future and their children's future.

Genocide widows, who are HIV positive as a result of rape, are filled with anxiety. Without a house of their own and income generating activities, widows with orphans live in constant insecurity wondering about what would happen to their children when they will not be there. The problem of shelter and poverty are not peculiar to rape victims but they worsen their situation. Rape victims openly said that there is nothing else to live for, they have little interest in life and people, and they are even ashamed of themselves. Rape has been very destructive to their confidence and sense of well-being and, for some, it was the final proof that there is no place for them in this world.²²⁸ Many of those raped are widows with children (orphans) who go to schools; need food, clothes and medical assistance. This contributes not only to their despair but also makes them not wish to live any longer. The idea of leaving their children adds to their despair.

Genocide widows are, in one way or another, traumatized and experience loneliness and social insecurity, but rape victims are more anguished than others. They find it hard to live in a community which stripped them of human dignity and more importantly they feel that they have been stripped of life. The question is: Can the community stand by them and give them back human dignity and hope to make them see potential in life again? For further discussion especially on the type of counseling rape victims get from Christina NGOs in order to overcome their trauma, see chapter five, p. 102.

²²⁷ Georgiana Treasure Evans, *Trip report for Rwanda July 2003*, p. 19.

²²⁸ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 50.

3. 5. Spiritual Welfare

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Christian church was introduced in Rwanda, and ever since the Church has been involved in all aspects of Rwandan society, playing the leading roles in many changes that Rwanda has gone through. But since 1959 and especially after April 1994, the inter-ethnic strife between the Hutu and the Tutsi has put to test all that the Christian church stands for as illustrated in the following quotation by John Martin:

There is no escape from the truth that the Christian church has been a major player in the tragic events in Rwanda which have horrified observers throughout the world in 1994. Churches have been the scenes of massacres and church leaders have acquiesced to hideous cruelty.²²⁹

The genocide occurred when Rwanda was only six years²³⁰ away from celebrating its first centenary of the Gospel of Christ. In spite of being a self-confessed Christian society, suffering and death have become commonplace in Rwanda.²³¹ After the genocide, observers and Rwandans themselves have asked many questions about Rwandans' spirituality and Christian morality. John Martin asks: "So how is that a Christian country deeply affected by revival should have perpetrated a holocaust of ethnic purification in the same league as the former Yugoslavia?"²³² Rwanda was and still is a Christian country, consequently most of the genocide survivors are Christians who may be asking questions such as: Where was God during our suffering? Why did the tragedy affect X and not Y?²³³ Kayitaba, the director of MOUCECORE, says that some of the genocide survivors tell them that "the God we tell them does not exist, otherwise where was He?"²³⁴ According to Dusabe Florence of MOUCECORE, some of the genocide widows say that, "even before we were praying, yet this tragedy still happened."²³⁵

These and other similar questions are clear indications of how the spirituality of the Rwandans and in particular genocide survivors has been affected. Many suffered at

²²⁹ John Martin. 1995 "Rwanda: Why?" in *Transformation an International Evangelical Dialogue on Mission and Ethics* Vol. 12 No. 2 April/ June pp.1-3.

²³⁰ The first Christian Church to work in Rwanda, the Catholic Church, began in 1900.

²³¹ Tharcisse, Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethics Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994" p. 36.

²³² John Martin 1995, "Rwanda: Why?", pp. 1-3.

²³³ Tharcisse Gatwa. "The Churches and Ethics Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p. 36.

²³⁴ Kayitaba Michel, oral interview, May 11, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

²³⁵ Dusabe Florence. oral interview, May 13, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

the hands of their fellow Christians who were supposed to look after them. As one Roman Catholic bishop has recognized: "The Christian message was not being heard. We have to begin again because our best catechists, those who filled our churches, were the first to go out with machetes in their hands."²³⁶ Unless these questions are adequately addressed, genocide survivors would not feel part of the same body of Christ again. The failure of the Church and the Christian community in general, to restore the spiritual welfare of genocide survivors may also hamper other efforts Christians are directing towards helping genocide victims. This is because what they need first as Christians is confidence in their neighbours, the Church and God.

A crisis of the Rwandan genocide is magnitude would shake and destroy the foundation of any society and leave it divided in many different ways. Francis Schaeffer provides a helpful explanation of the divisions that have occurred as a consequence of the "fall," Gen 3:23-24. He argues that:

Man [humanity] was divided from God, first' and, then, ever since the Fall, man is separated from himself [a person is separated from him or herself]. These are the psychological divisions. I am convinced that this is the basic psychosis: that the individual man [person] is divided from himself [or herself] as a result of the Fall. The next division is that man is [humans are] divided from other men [humans]; these are the sociological divisions. And then man is [humans are] divided from nature, and nature is divided from nature.²³⁷

In the light of the tragedy of 1994, it is fair to suggest that the above-mentioned types of divisions are indeed a reality in Rwanda. What happened eleven years ago was one of their consequences and firm evidence that Rwanda is a deeply divided society.

The healing of the above-cited divisions is the task facing Christians in this world. Schaeffer argues that "by God's grace, upon the basis of the work of Christ, substantial healing can be a reality here and now".²³⁸ This is the challenge to the Christians in the post-genocide Rwanda.

The stand of the Christian church in Rwanda vis-à-vis the sufferings and oppression has also been questioned as Gatwa has observed,

²³⁶ John, Martin 1995, "Rwanda: Why?", pp. 1-3.

²³⁷ Francis Schaeffer and U. Middlemann, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway Books, 1992 edition, p. 66.

²³⁸ Francis Schaeffer and U. Middlemann, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, p. 66.

The failure of the moral forces to understand fully or to interpret accurately the reality of suffering in Rwanda shows how the churches may live in the midst of the poor and oppressed but exist for the rich. Yet the biblical ethos suggests that the identity of a Christian community is to live in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.²³⁹

In the light of the above observations, genocide victims need to be assured that Christians stand by them in their suffering. Secular organizations do assist by offering them physical and material help but, as Francis Schaeffer noted Christians are called, on the basis of Christ's redeeming work on the cross, to work for that substantial healing in the divisions that have occurred in the world.²⁴⁰

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the plight of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville Province from several perspectives. In addition to losing their husbands, widows have also lost their children, property and livestock. They have also lost confidence in personal and social relationships. Many suffered the indignity of rape and gang rape. Most of the rape victims are now HIV positive, either fighting for their lives, or suffering from the social stigma attached to the disease. They wonder about the future of their children after they die. The horrific events of April 1994 left many survivors including widows, psychologically damaged. Most genocide widows just like their offenders claim to be Christians. This as well, has damaged the image of the Christian church but more significantly it has affected the spirituality of the victims. Genocide affected all aspects of widows' lives and also plunged them into total poverty. Eleven years after, they are still suffering from its consequences, therefore any response to their plight should not only be adequate but holistic as well. The next chapter will examine the problem of poverty and the Christian basis for integral human transformation in order to assess the Christian NGOs' response to the needs of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville Province.

²³⁹ Tharcisse, Gatwa, "The Churches and Ethics Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", p. 37.

²⁴⁰ Francis Schaeffer and U. Middlemann, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, pp. 66-67.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTIAN BASIS FOR INTEGRAL HUMAN TRANSFORMATION

4.0. Introduction

John Wesley Kabango points out that:

Rwanda was already one of the world's poorest countries before the genocide and the events of 1994 led to a catastrophic increase in poverty, with 70 per cent of households below the poverty line.²⁴¹

Genocide left the government of Rwanda and other bodies involved in poverty alleviation faced with a number of formidable challenges. Kabango for instance notes, "many women are heading households because their husbands were killed or are in prison."²⁴²

This chapter, focuses on poverty, what it is, its causes and how to respond to it. In the post-genocide Rwanda, poverty is undeniably one of the thorniest problems the whole nation is facing although it affects women more severely (in this case genocide widows) than males. As Bryant Myers observes "the poor are often women, and the poverty of women is both a special concern and a special opportunity."²⁴³ In the light of Myers' remark there is the need to note that genocide widows' poverty is multifaceted. They are materially deprived, physically assaulted (most of them) and weakened, isolated both at individual and societal levels, vulnerable in many ways, powerless and spiritually low.

After the genocide, both secular and faith-based development agencies therefore increased their efforts of alleviating poverty in Rwanda and more so directed efforts

²⁴¹ John Wesley Kabango. "Case study Church-Based Rural Development: RDIS, Rwanda" in Tim Chester, *Justice, Mercy and Humility Integral Mission and the Poor*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002, p. 168.

²⁴² John Wesley Kabango, "Case study Church-Based Rural Development: RDIS, Rwanda", p. 168.

²⁴³ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2000, p.65.

towards vulnerable groups such as women (widows in particular). Myers makes an apt comment on the response to poverty which is pertinent to our study,

The way we understand poverty and its causes tends to shape how we respond to poverty and what we think poverty eradication looks like. If our understanding of poverty focuses on its material manifestations, so does our response. If our understanding of poverty and its causes are social or cultural, then our response tends to focus on changing social structures or addressing cultural causes of poverty.²⁴⁴

When people involved in responding to poverty have divergent understandings of its nature, their responses to it also differ. In this chapter, we attempt to discuss transformation as a way of responding to poverty, from a Christian point of view with particular reference to the plight of genocide widows in Rwanda.

The key points emerging from the discussions will be used to evaluate the Christian response to the plight of widows of genocide in Kigali-Ville Province by Christian NGOs in the next chapter. In this chapter we will consider views of several scholars including Bryant L. Myers, Vinay Samuel, Chris Sugden, Wayne Bragg, Kwame Bediako and Darrel Whiteman.

Before we look at different ways of responding to poverty, it is important to understand the nature and causes of poverty.

4.1. The nature and causes of poverty

There are no unified views on the nature of poverty, for scholars understand and define poverty in different ways. Myers argues that “poverty is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.”²⁴⁵ He examines different theories on poverty and notes that in early days of development thinking, people defined poverty as “deficit or a lack.”²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴Bryant L. Myers, “The Church and transformational development” in *Transformation an International Evangelical Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, Vol. 17 No. 2, (April/June 2000) p. 64.

²⁴⁵ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 86.

²⁴⁶ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 65.

In other words poverty is lack of enough food, water, shelter and land. Furthermore, Myers remarks that understanding poverty as deficit assumes that “when the missing things are provided, the poor will no longer be poor.”²⁴⁷

Second, some authors such as Robert Chambers view poverty as “entanglement”. Using the household as a point of reference he enumerates different indicators of poverty which include, “material poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness.”²⁴⁸ However Myers goes beyond Chambers to add the dimension of “spiritual poverty”. Myers describes “spiritual poverty” as where a household has “broken relationships with God, each other, the community, and creation.”²⁴⁹

Third, Myers points out that John Friedman defines poverty as “lack of access to social power.”²⁵⁰ Friedman suggests eight bases for measuring poverty associated with social power and the household. These include: financial resources, social networks, information for self-development, surplus time, instruments of work and livelihood, social organizations, knowledge and skills and defensible life space.”

Fourth, Jayakumar Christian defines poverty as “disempowerment.”²⁵¹ Christian describes the interacting cultural, social, spiritual/ religious, personal and biophysical systems that influence a person’s life. If these integrating systems trap a person in a system of disempowerment, it results in the person becoming poor.

Myers then concludes that “poverty is a complicated social issue involving all areas of life- physical, personal, social, cultural, and spiritual.”²⁵² Taking into account the different views on poverty, Myers gives a holistic understanding of poverty. He suggests that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational. In his view, “poverty is

²⁴⁷ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 65.

²⁴⁸ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 67 as citing Robert Chambers, *Rural Development. Putting the Last First*, London: Longman Group, 1983, pp.103-39.

²⁴⁹ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 67.

²⁵⁰ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 71 as citing John Friedman, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*, Cambridge, Mass.:Blackwell, pp.26-31.

²⁵¹ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 72, as citing Jayakumar, *Powerlessness of the Poor: Toward an Alternative Kingdom of God Based Paradigm of Response*, PhD Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, 1994, p. 334.

²⁵² Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 81.

a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life and that are not harmonious or enjoyable."²⁵³ Myers further argues that,

Human beings are relational beings, intended to live in just and peaceful relationships with each other, with their environment and with God. In this conceptual framework, poverty is a holistic idea that describes the breakdown of this constellation of relationships.²⁵⁴

What causes poverty? There are no common views on the causes of poverty. People suggest several causes of poverty depending on how they understand the nature of poverty. From Myers' perspective, to understand the causes of poverty, also depends on "where we start looking at poverty, and more important, where we stop looking."²⁵⁵ Although Myers classifies the causes of poverty in four categories, he argues that,

The fundamental cause of poverty is spiritual. Sin is what distorts and bends relationships in ways that create the myriad expressions of human poverty in its material, social and spiritual forms. Degraded land, ill-health, marginalization, unjust economic and political structures, ethnic wars and every other cause of poverty find their roots in fallen human beings, rebellious principalities and powers and a cursed creation.²⁵⁶

Myers' approach seems to locate sources of poverty in the spiritual realm. This view disregards structural evil. Poverty also results from unjust social, political and legal structures that marginalize and oppress the poor and vulnerable.

From the above description of the nature of poverty and its causes we can conclude that genocide survivors in general and genocide widows in particular live in poverty. Without husbands, shelter, property and suffering from broken relationships, ill-health and spiritual despair; they experience poverty in its various dimensions. We agree with Myers that the "understanding of poverty and its causes shapes the way people respond to it."²⁵⁷

Genocide affected all aspects of their lives, resulting in multifaceted deprivation and it is in the light of this predicament of genocide widows and Myers' understanding of

²⁵³ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 86.

²⁵⁴ Bryant L. Myers, "The Church and transformational development", p. 64.

²⁵⁵ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 82.

²⁵⁶ Bryant L. Myers, "The Church and transformational development", p. 64.

²⁵⁷ Bryant L. Myers, "The Church and transformation development", p.64.

poverty that we will assess the response of Christian NGOs to genocide widows' poverty.

However it is inadequate to discuss poverty without also examining the concept of ministering to the poor and how that concept has changed from development to transformation.

4. 2. Biblical basis for human transformation

The use of the term "transformation" in relation to ministering to the poor is a recent development in Christian ministry to the needy, as Chris Sugden observes:

The term transformation was applied to Christian involvement in what is known as development in the Wheaton statement of 1983: Transformation-the church in response to Human Need. It has become a significant Christian way of talking about development, promoted not by Christian mission organizations but by Christian development organizations working among the poor.²⁵⁸

Just like there are different understandings of the nature and causes of poverty, there are different perspectives on what the term "development" means. In this regard Bragg notes:

Development, it is clear, has come to mean a wide variety of things, depending on a given set of culturally defined assumptions. Theologians and Christian development workers, like their secular counterparts, have struggled to understand what true development is.²⁵⁹

Whiteman also highlighted the controversy surrounding the term "development". In his view, "it is an explosive, emotional and often-politicized term."²⁶⁰ Moreover, he notes that in the 1970s and 80s the term "development" itself went through some important semantic shifts. Whiteman argues that these changes exposed the weakness of what he called "the dominant paradigm of development."²⁶¹ This paradigm focuses on one aspect of human life, the rate of economic growth. In this sense, development

²⁵⁸ Chris Sugden, "Transformational Development: Current state of understanding and practice" in *Transformation an International Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, Vol. 20, No 2, (April 2003), p. 70.

²⁵⁹ Wayne, G. Bragg, "From Development to Transformation", p. 38.

²⁶⁰ Darrel L. Whiteman, "Bible Translation and social cultural development", p.120.

²⁶¹ Darrel L. Whiteman, "Bible Translation and social cultural development", p.120.

was regarded to be the same as modernization which “implied economic growth with a focus on technology and industrialization.”²⁶²

However, Whiteman notes that this pattern of development reflected a heavy western bias based on a number of assumptions including, unlimited growth and inexhaustible resources for industrialization. It was also based on the belief that human beings were basically economic creatures and that they would respond rationally to economic incentives in the same way as the Westerners would, prioritizing their economic worries ahead of any other concerns. The dominant paradigm also assumed a trickle-down effect from national centrally planned programmes to develop local communities. They showed, as Whiteman notes that there is “no confidence in the ability of local communities to have autonomous self-development.”²⁶³

But the dominant paradigm came under serious scrutiny and questioning following its failure to meet its expectations. Development analysts, including Whiteman, have come to realize that “economic development does not automatically lead to human development.”²⁶⁴ As a result of the failure of the dominant paradigm, people started to frame new models of development.

For instance, as an alternative to the dominant paradigm Whiteman suggested the model of integral human development. As noted in Chapter I, he defines integral human development as “a process, which enables poor people to gain control over themselves, their environment and their future so that they can realize the full potential of life that God has made possible.”²⁶⁵ Whiteman highlights elements which are also emphasized by scholars such as Bragg and Myers in their understandings of transformation.

Therefore, it is pertinent to examine different views on the concept of transformation and reasons why some scholars suggest that transformation best fits a Christian model of responding to human needs.

²⁶² Darrel L. Whiteman, “Bible Translation and social cultural development”, p.121.

²⁶³ Darrel L. Whiteman, “Bible Translation and social cultural development”, p.121.

²⁶⁴ Darrel L. Whiteman, “Bible Translation and social cultural development”, p.121.

²⁶⁵ Darrel L. Whiteman, “Bible Translation and cultural development”, p. 125.

4.3. Transformation instead of Development

Bragg does not view the idea of transformation as a replacement for the concept of development but as a Christian way of looking at changes taking place in human society. The idea of transformation is thus viewed as “a set of principles against which any theory of development may be measured.”²⁶⁶ According to Vinay Samuel,

Transformation is to enable God’s vision of society to be actualized in all relationships, social, economic and spiritual, so that God’s will may be reflected in human society and his love be experienced by all communities, especially the poor.²⁶⁷

Myers defines transformation as “a term that reflects a concern for seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially and spiritually.”²⁶⁸ J. Alvarez et al concur with Myers, but suggest that:

Transformational development seeks to respond to the needs of the poor in a holistic manner. It seeks to follow Christ in the way he went about doing his ministry, encompassing the physical, spiritual, social and cultural dimensions of personal and societal life.²⁶⁹

This concept of transformation has its Christian foundation in the Bible as Bragg illustrates:

Throughout the Bible, we see how the existing reality is transformed into a higher dimension and purpose: a ragtag slave group in Egypt is changed into the Hebrew nation; a small band of powerless Jews are transformed into the Church that altered the course of history. Christ’s ministry was transformed too- a Passover supper into powerful symbols of his death and communion, and even the Roman executioner’s cross into sign of victory. Transformation is to take what is and turn it into what it could and should be.²⁷⁰

In the light of his own definition of the concept of transformation and of other authors such as Thomas McAlpine, Vinay Samuel, Sugden suggests nine components of

²⁶⁶ Wayne G. Bragg, “From Development to Transformation”, p. 40.

²⁶⁷ Vinay Samuel quoted by Chris, Sugden “Transformational Development: Current state of understanding and practice”, p. 71.

²⁶⁸ Bryant L. Myers quoted by Stephen, Mugabi, “Building God’s Kingdom through Microenterprise Development: A Christian vision for transformational development” in *Transformation An International Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, Vol. 20 No 3 (July 2003), p.135.

²⁶⁹ Joy Alvarez, Elnora Avarientos and Thomas H. McAlpine, “Our Experience with the Bible and Transformational Development” in Bryant L. Myers (ed), *Working with the poor, New Insights and Learnings from Development Practitioners*, Monrovia: World Vision, 1999, p. 57.

²⁷⁰ Wayne G. Bragg, “From Development to Transformation” p. 38-9.

transformation.²⁷¹ The first component is of “a new creation,” as in 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, in which transformation reflects the new that has already come and the passing away of the old. The second, the third and the fourth components highlight the centrality of the cross in the process of transformation. The unconditional love and the suffering of Jesus on the cross ushers in new possibilities including liberating poor people from “the concept of fate that controls their lives.” Therefore, the cross opens the way for reconciliation not only between Jesus Christ and humanity but also between people and between people and their environment. Thus the cross is a key to new and better possibilities and prospects for the whole humanity. It is in this respect therefore, that the work of Jesus on the cross is considered to be “at the heart of transformation.”²⁷² Fifth, Sugden points out that there is need for “an integral relation between evangelism and social action.”

Sixth, he sees “mission as witness and journey.” The idea of transformation is perceived as kind of journey which people are called to join at the personal level and communal levels, bearing witness to the lordship of God and making use of their abilities and gifts. The seventh, component calls for stewardship “as the content of God’s image in humanity, requiring access to material resources and thus equality of opportunity.” Sugden’s eighth component is Shalom, which is witnessed in healthy relationships (1 Kings 5: 12); well being (Genesis 37: 14); prosperity (Jer 33: 6, 9) and moral character (Ps. 37: 37). Last, there is the component of freedom, which is about the “ability to be yourself, have self worth and self-esteem, supported by and in relation to others.” Sugden further remarks that although these components are Christian, they are for the benefit of the community because it generates a common commitment to others, addresses poverty and culture; is open to the spiritual; seeks community transformation incorporating values of freedom and wholeness.

4.4. Goals of transformation

There are two main goals of transformation:

²⁷¹ Chris Sugden, “Transformational Development: Current state of understanding and practice” , pp. 73-4.

²⁷² This is similar to Schaeffer’s comment referred to in Chapter three.

In the same line of thought, Kwame Bediako stresses the importance of identity and dignity in the process of transformation by suggesting that transforming people begins with helping them discover that “their human dignity and identity are intrinsically related to God in Christ through his redemptive purpose in salvation history.”²⁷⁷ Like Bediako, J. Alvarez emphasizes the importance of dignity in the transforming process by saying that “the strategies and approaches of transformational development affirm the dignity and worth of people as created in the image of God.”²⁷⁸

The fundamental idea of transformation is not only to turn around the predicament of the poor, but also to build confidence in them by assuring them that the transformation of their plight into a better situation is God’s plan for humankind. Myers’ concept of transformation entails “teaching people to read, to understand and interpret their context, to figure out what and who is contributing to their current situation, and then to decide what they want to do about it.”²⁷⁹

2. *Just and peaceful relationships.*

The second goal of transformation is a direct response to an important cause of poverty, that is the breakdown of relationships. It is the healing and restoration of those broken relationships which Myers calls “the recovery of just and peaceful relationships.”²⁸⁰ Although Myers appears to confine the healing process to that between humans, he just as Schaeffer indicates that the breakdown in relationships has resulted from the fall of humanity and this has caused poverty in all dimensions of life. Both Myers and Schaeffer argue that a substantial healing of the broken relationships transforms humanity into what God intends it to be. A transformed humanity is one that enjoys healthy and harmonious relationships with its creator, with itself and with its environment.

²⁷⁷ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 116 as citing Kwame Bediako, “Biblical Perspectives on Transformational Development: Some Reflections,” an unpublished manuscript presented at the World Vision Development Training and Education Workshop, Lilongwe, Malawi, October 4-9, 1996.

²⁷⁸ Joy Alvarez, Elnora Avarientos and Thomas H. McAlpine, “Our Experience with the Bible and Transformation Development”, p. 56.

²⁷⁹ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 117.

²⁸⁰ Bryant L. Myers, “The Church and transformational development”, p.65.

The transformation that the Bible calls for is achieved, when the above relational framework is constantly worked at in the transformation process, as Bragg observes:

The transformation that the Bible calls us to is a transformation of both individuals and social structures that allows us to move toward increasing harmony with God, with our environment, and with ourselves.²⁸¹

Transformation seeks to respond to the needs of the poor holistically. To achieve that, framers of the idea of transformation argue, it has to reflect a holistic biblical perspective on the well being of human beings. Indeed it is the addition of the spiritual dimension that make transformation different from any other development strategy, as far as the wholeness and integrity of humanity are concerned.

As we mentioned in chapter one, efforts of Christian NGOs must among other things aim at an integral transformation of the Rwandan society. We therefore propose that Whiteman's paradigm of Integral Human Development be modified into Integral Human Transformation, which submits that the ministry to the poor must be holistic and balanced.

4. 5. Biblical Basis for the empowerment of Women

Various studies illustrate how poverty affects more women than men; indeed there is the tendency to identify poverty with women, in what Jaap Bogaards refers to as "feminization of poverty."²⁸² Bogaards uses the UNDP²⁸³ statistics to illustrate that "Two third of the world's illiterate are women, 70 percent of the world's poor are women and women earn 30-40% less than men for the same work."²⁸⁴ Myers also uses UN²⁸⁵ statistics to argue that poverty affects women in various aspects of their lives more than their male counterparts because "Women and girls receive less schooling, have poorer nutrition, and receive less health care."²⁸⁶

²⁸¹ Wayne G. Bragg, "From Development to Transformation" p. 47.

²⁸² Jaap Bogaards, "Challenges for Tear Fund Holland in the Twenty-First Century" in *Transformation An International Evangelical Dialogue on Mission and Ethics*, Vol. 13 No 4 (October/December 1996), p. 7.

²⁸³ United Nations Development Program.

²⁸⁴ Jaap Bogaards, "Challenges for Tear Fund Holland in the Twenty-First Century", p. 7.

²⁸⁵ United Nations.

²⁸⁶ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the poor*, p. 65.

In many societies, women are still marginalized, less represented in decision-making positions, and more victimized in civil unrest. These factors add another dimension to the perception of transformation. Myers emphasizes that:

This must be an area of special concern for those working for human transformation...Thus, women offer a special opportunity if we simply keep them in sight and involved as part of the development process. Transformation development that does not include gender analysis and seek the empowerment of women will fail.²⁸⁷

In the light of the above observations, transformation can only be substantial, effective and integral if women are given a prominent place in the process of transformation especially if they are empowered to become the subjects of their own personal and societal transformation. Therefore empowerment of women is an essential dimension in human transformation. Several authors including Alvarez et al, Ursula King and Myers have addressed the issue of empowerment and its relevance in relation to the process of human transformation from different perspectives.

Using Isaiah 61, J. Alvarez argues that the poor are and should be the focus of empowerment efforts.²⁸⁸ Empowering the poor entails not only providing them with the necessary skills but also helping them to build their self-confidence and mental character. This enables them to take the responsibility of transforming their predicament into a situation of better prospects on life.

For empowerment to take place, the poor should be able to read and understand the nature of their disempowerment and how they can transform it into God's intended human situation. Alvarez states that:

At the core of the empowerment process is the need for the poor to have a growing awareness of their disempowerment and the web of realities that conspire to relegate them to poverty. The spirit of empowerment occurs when the poor recognize that God is supreme over all powers vying for the poor's allegiance and discipleship. God is the power that fuels a community's efforts to unshackle itself from the chains of poverty.

²⁸⁷ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 65.

²⁸⁸ Joy Alvarez, Elnora Avarientos and Thomas H. McAlpine "Our Experience with the Bible and Transformational Development", p. 68.

oppression and injustice. This experience of freedom is empowerment, a blessing.²⁸⁹

It is important to note that the empowerment process has wide-reaching effects not only at the individual level but also at the communal level in the sense that those empowered are then able to empower others, and likewise be empowered (blessed).²⁹⁰ Disempowerment not only affects the personal life of the poor, it also hampers the smooth running of societal life, and therefore in the process of empowering the poor, the whole society benefits. It is in this respect that Alvarez compares empowerment to a “mustard seed”.²⁹¹ Therefore when women are disempowered they not only suffer but others in society suffer as well. Likewise, when women are empowered the whole society benefits.

Ursula King regards Matthew 15: 21- 28 as an inspiring text for empowering women. Following the discussion between Jesus and the Canaanite woman, King identifies some points which in her view may have implications for women involved in development work:

1. As leaders, facilitators, catalysts, animators in development, they have nothing to lose as they “challenge superiors, people in authority and power structures that hold them in bondage.”
2. “Women need to be aware of their strengths and use them to their advantage. The Canaanite woman knew she was good with words and turned her strength into an advantage when she debated with Jesus.”
3. “Women need to be able to handle conflict and not run away from situations that seem oppressive.”
4. “Through standing firm in the face of discrimination, women can educate men and force them into making choices.”²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Joy Alvarez, Elnora Avarientos and Thomas H. McAlpine. “Our Experience with the Bible and Transformational Development”, p. 68,69.

²⁹⁰ Joy Alvarez, Elnora Avarientos and Thomas H. McAlpine, “Our Experience with the Bible and Transformational Development”, p. 69.

²⁹¹ Joy Alvarez, Elnora Avarientos and Thomas H. McAlpine. “Our Experience with the Bible and Transformational Development”, p. 69.

²⁹² Ursula King, “Reflections on Biblical Texts”, in Ursula King (ed) *Feminist Theology from the Third World*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994, pp. 203-4.

One of the causes of women's disempowerment is the fact that they are left out of the process of transformation or are given lesser opportunities compared to men. Therefore it is fair to suggest that enabling the poor/ women to get involved in the transforming process is another way of empowering them. Myers supports this view by arguing that "empowerment is the effect of participation."²⁹³ Myers identifies participation of the poor in transformation as an important factor for the dynamism and the efficiency of the process. "If the development story belongs to the community" he argues, "then local participation is demanded as an acknowledgement of this fact." Myers further says that "if poverty is in part a reflection of the marred identity of the poor, then participation is essential to any effort to restore their identity."²⁹⁴ As it was noted earlier, the poor are the focal point of the transforming process not as simple objects but as subjects of their own lives,²⁹⁵ given the fact that it is they and their situation, which is need of transforming. Myers further suggests that:

Participation is meaningful when it means ownership of the process, all the process: research and analysis, planning, implementing, and evaluating. For its impact to be significant, the basis of participation must be as genuine partners, even senior partners. The form of participation must be integral and central, not occasional and formalistic. The extent of participation must be complete and without limit.²⁹⁶

In the light of the above remark, transformation can only truly take place when the poor are fully involved in the process. In other words, when they are empowered to confidently read, understand and determine the terms in which the changing of their plight into God's intended human situation will occur. As Myers has said, empowerment is, "after all, one of the means of transformation."²⁹⁷

At the beginning of this section we saw how poverty affects more women than men and one of the reasons behind that is because they are disempowered. Nevertheless the effects of disempowerment are not only felt by women but by the whole human society. However, unless women are enabled and empowered to confidently and responsibly (as implied in Ursula King's interpretation of Mathew 15: 21-28) get

²⁹³ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 148.

²⁹⁴ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 147.

²⁹⁵ Molefe Tsele, "The Role of the Christian Faith in Development" in Deryke Belshaw Robert Calderisi, Chris Sugden (eds.), *Faith Development Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa*, Akropong: Regnum Books International, 2001, p. 201.

²⁹⁶ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 148.

²⁹⁷ Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, p. 148.

involved in the transforming process, transformation as a Christian way of responding to human need will fail.

The poor need help in terms of guidance in order to build their self-confidence, inherent capacity and skills in order for them to decide on the future of their own lives. This is indeed relevant to the Rwandan post-genocide context, where the number of poor people (mostly women) has increased. In this regard there is need to empower them to transform their predicament into a situation where they have better prospects, otherwise the future of poor genocide widows will be clouded by lingering consequences of 1994. For the transformation process to have any impact on the overall living conditions of the poor in Rwanda, all areas of the societal life have to be looked at and treated equally. There cannot be transformation if only one area and one category of people are targeted. In other words the success of transformation in Rwanda lays in the participation of each and every member of the Rwandan society in that process and in a holistic approach.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed poverty, its nature and causes from several perspectives and how the community and the Christian community in particular, should respond to the plight of the poor. We have examined the weakness with the concept of “development” and shown how Christian analysts regard “transformation” as more a holistic term than “development” because the latter “is intrinsically related to a mechanism in pursuit of economic growth that tends to ignore the structural context of poverty and injustice and which increases dependency and inequality.”²⁹⁸

“Transformation” points to a number of changes that have to take place in many societies if the poor are to enjoy their rightful heritage in creation.²⁹⁹ It also takes into consideration all aspects of human lives with particular emphasis on spiritual

²⁹⁸ Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, “Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need Wheaton Consultation June 1983” in Vinay Samuel & Chris Sugden, *Mission as Transformation a Theology of the Whole Gospel*, Akropong: Regnum Books International, 1999, p. 264.

²⁹⁹ Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden “Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need Wheaton Consultation June 1983”, p. 265.

dimension. Spiritual factors not only contribute to the root causes of poverty but they are a key factor in bringing substantial healing to the poor in line with God's purposes.

In this study we have adapted Whiteman's model as integral human transformation because it is more appropriate to the nature of this study. For transformation to be efficient, integral and holistic, some components are needed such as empowerment through which the poor are enabled to become active participants in the process of transformation.

Poverty is not only a personal concern it is also a societal problem. Therefore working or responding to the needs of "the poor is an endeavor that tests the values of a given society."³⁰⁰ Rwanda is still a self-confessed Christian society whose poverty was aggravated by the genocide. Women and genocide widows, in particular, are firm evidence of the reality of poverty in post-genocide Rwanda. During the crisis they were robbed of what makes them human, specifically their identity as children of God. In the next chapter we will examine, how the Christian community in Rwanda through Christian NGOs is restoring genocide widow's humanity and identity by responding to economic, physical, social, psychological and spiritual manifestations of their poverty.

³⁰⁰ Molefe Tsele, "The Role of the Christian Faith in Development" p. 210.

CHAPTER 5

ASSESSING THE RESPONSE OF CHRISTIAN NGOS

5.0. Introduction

The previous discussions in chapter four, about the concept of transformation and Whiteman's notion of integral human development leads us to conclude that the ministry of working with the poor and the underprivileged calls for an equal consideration of all aspects of poverty. Every need is important, and if any need is overlooked or is given less attention it may result in the failure of the whole process.

Whiteman's metaphor of the wheel of integral human development as already observed stresses the importance of treating all the components equally for a smooth ride. He argues that "if some components are developed while others are neglected then we get an aberration of development that is no longer conceptually like a wheel."³⁰¹

To adapt Whiteman's metaphor to the Rwandan situation, and in particular to the plight of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville province, certain components namely shelter, reconciliation, repentance, forgiveness and empowerment have been included. Moreover, as it was noted in Chapter Four in order to suit Whiteman's paradigm to the objectives of this study it was changed into Integral Human Transformation, with a wheel comprising the above components (see below Fig.2).

³⁰¹ Darrel, L. Whiteman, "Bible translation and social and cultural development" p. 126.

vision and objectives of MOUCECORE changed because of the new context that developed in post-genocide Rwanda. Like Caritas Rwanda, MOUCECORE used seminars to encourage Christians to identify one another's needs in their communities and use their own resources to respond to them.

Christians were particularly encouraged to help the most vulnerable first, like genocide widows who are weak, sick or old. Like Caritas, MOUCECORE came in as a facilitator, adviser and provider of material needs. Kayitaba is of the view that, the results are more noticeable in rural areas than in urban areas.³⁰⁷

Christian NGOs are not the only organizations that have been involved in solving the shelter problem for genocide widows; others are secular NGOs, namely IBUKA and AVEGA, which also have provided shelter for genocide widows. At Kimironko (Kigali-Ville) about 180 houses were built for genocide widows in the context of urgency immediately after the genocide. Consequently some of them were not built properly or completed, therefore in the six or seven years since being built, some of these houses require major repairs. Thus, shelter is still a problem for genocide widows not only because houses were not built but because some were not properly built.

Jacqueline Kagirimpundu is a genocide widow, a mother of four and HIV positive. She is renting one room of an old building in one of the underprivileged areas of Nyamirambo district, she describes her current situation:

Ubu ndakubuwiye ngo nuko ugeze hano imvura itagwa, ubu iyo imvura iguye ndanyagirwa abana nkabura ahantu mbashyira, nyine nkumva birandenge. Iyo imvura igwa njyewe icyo nkora ni ukurira Imana gusa kuko ntakindi mbona nakora.³⁰⁸

It is only that you have come here when there is no rain. When it rains, the rain falls on me and I don't know where to put the children. When it rains I feel hopeless and I can only cry to God because there is nothing else I can do.

Ten years after genocide Kagirimpundu is questioning the efficiency of NGOs which are claiming to assist genocide widows. According to her:

³⁰⁷ Kayitaba Michel, oral interview, May 11, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

³⁰⁸ Jacqueline Kagirimpundu, oral interview, July 22, 2004, Nyamirambo- Kigali-Ville.

Njyewe mbona nta kintu bakora gihagije iyo baza kuba bakora ibagije nk'ukuntu bagomba kudufasha, nkubu hashize imyaka cumi genocide ibaye. njyewe mbona iyo baza kuba bafasha umuntu ubu rwose nagombye kuba narabonye inzu.³⁰⁹

In my view they are not doing enough in helping us, as they should, it is now ten years after genocide. According to me if they were really helping us I would have gotten a house by now.

Kagirimpundu is frustrated because according to her “they all know about her plight”, (*ibyo byose barabizi*).

Mukayiranga Véréna³¹⁰ is a genocide widow and a mother of four living in the *Umudugudu* “Village” of Kimironko in Kakiru District, built specifically for genocide widows. According to her, people come and photograph widows and their unfinished houses and widows never hear from them again. A close look at Mukayiranga’s house from the inside shows that it was obviously unfinished; the mud on the walls was falling down. The house of Mukayiranga requires proper finishing.

It may be difficult to assess the efficiency of Christian NGOs on the bases of two examples but the above cases give us an idea of what genocide widows with shelter problems are going through. Twelve (67%) out of 18 widows interviewees do not have their own houses meaning that they are in one way or another in Kagirimpundu’s situation. Kagirimpundu is sick and weak, yet she has to find money to pay rent for one room and she also worries about where her children would be when she dies because she realizes that she could die any time. Mukayiranga has a house, but it is unfinished and in need of repair. The money she earns from selling charcoal is not enough to complete the house and support the family, and this worries her. It is difficult to know the exact number of genocide widows with shelter problems, but one thing is certain, widows with shelter problems will find it difficult moving on in life if this problem is not efficiently addressed. In our model of the Wheel of Integral Human Transformation, components of human community are evenly distributed in all areas and the idea is to have them developed together to ensure a “smooth ride” or a balanced growth. This implies that when one component is not developed or is given less consideration it affects the growth of other components even if they are given full

³⁰⁹ Jacqueline Kagirimpundu, oral interview, July 22, 2004, Nyamirambo, Kigali-Ville.

³¹⁰ Mukayiranga Véréna, oral interview, May 15, 2004, Kimironko-Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

after the genocide when she was still physically strong, *Ababikira b'Urukundo* (the Catholic Nuns of Love) helped her and other nine genocide widows in starting a business. With the support of these Nuns, they opened a restaurant. It worked for sometime and collapsed, simply because they did not know how to run the business. There is no doubt that there are other genocide widows who have had similar experiences because of lack of management skills.

In realizing this difficulty, A.E.E started training genocide widows in different aspects of business management, like marketing and banking. It is worthy of note to mention that the failure of genocide widows in running businesses is not only due to lack of business skills. It is also due to their perception of NGOs and especially how widows or needy people in general, value and use the financial support they get from NGOs, particularly Christian organizations.

René Muremangingo³¹⁴ of A.E.E points out that the words “help” or “aid” when translated into Kinyarwanda, bring confusion between NGOs and beneficiaries. The term *imfashanyo* in Kinyarwanda means something a person gets from another person as a result of the sympathy the giver has for the receiver's situation.

Therefore when the beneficiaries get something from a Christian NGO they use it in the light of their understanding of *imfashanyo* and see it as theirs and always expect to get more. NGOs on the other hand perceive it as misunderstanding or misusing of the assistance. NGOs assist by giving loans, but some NGOs state that widows misuse the loans and do not repay. In this regard, as part of their development strategies, NGOs which give loans to widows (like A.E.E, Caritas, MOUCECORE, Solace Ministries, World Relief etc...) intend to assist widows in using these loans not only profitably but also responsibly.

In Kigali-Ville most genocide widows who received loans from Christian NGOs are involved in commercial activities. Some have kiosks where they sell soft drinks, others sell foodstuffs, second hand clothing while others have opened restaurants. There are also widows (at Kakiru, Kagugu and Remera) who are involved in small

³¹⁴ René Muremangingo, oral interview, April 14, 2004, Remera- Kigali-Ville.

projects like weaving of baskets. These Christian NGOs (such as Solace Ministries) assist them in different ways, such as finding the market for their products.³¹⁵

In all the Christian NGOs the researcher visited and interviewed, staff members do not deal with widows individually, rather they advise them to form small groups (solidarity groups). This approach has many advantages. First, as Christian institutions, they are willing to help any person in need whether Christian or not. They help widows living with HIV/AIDS and women whose husbands are in prison because of their involvement in the genocide. Therefore in these small groups of women, people with different experiences are found working together and sharing their experiences and comforting one another. In the Rwandan context, this is an important step towards peaceful cohabitation, mutual respect and reconciliation. Second, putting their efforts together boosts their morale and performance and this gives the opportunity to the facilitators and advisers to reach out to the genocide widows and for self-evaluation.

Income generating activities are helpful to genocide widows in many ways. In addition to being a key source of income, it is a way of regaining their self-esteem and dignity in the sense that, through these activities, genocide widows are able to go out in public with confidence and be respected by other people. Moreover, through this scheme widows have reclaimed their status in the society, because they portray themselves as working and responsible people. They are no longer perceived as lost or idle, always waiting upon the good will of others.

Through the above supportive programs scheme,³¹⁶ genocide widows are proving that they can take care of themselves and their families. They earn money to feed and cloth themselves and their children and pay for transport and for other means of communication. In other words, through these activities they take up the responsibilities of their dead husbands. It is also a dignified way of interacting with the society after having been victims of self-isolation.³¹⁷ Being involved in income generating activities is an indication of the recovery of genocide widows' sense of

³¹⁵ Béata of Solace Ministries, oral interview, June 1, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

³¹⁶ Ben Kayumba, oral interview, April 21, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

³¹⁷ Beata, oral interview, June 1, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

responsibility, creativity, and self-determination to rise up to the challenge. In addition, it shows that they still have a place and a role to play in the society. As Kanazayire remarked, “when widows are able to clothe themselves and regularly afford hairdressing they feel proud and confident”.³¹⁸

Marthe Mukandutiye proudly showed the researcher her new dress, *ibitenge* which she obtained with the help of her Church, *L’Eglise Vivante* (The Living Church). Despite her plight (HIV positive and a serious head injury), Mukandutiye reported that since joining Solace Ministries she feels more confident. She can now go out which she could not easily do before. Mukandutiye and the other seven HIV positive genocide widows were given money by Solace Ministries to buy goats.

However, there are still many genocide widows who are not part of this scheme. Furthermore as Reverend Peter Twahirwa³¹⁹ of Eglise Episcopale du Rwanda (EER),³²⁰ Remera Parish points out, there are many genocide widows in Kigali-Ville with many problems. Although the Christian community and Christian NGOs in particular are trying to help them, it is always difficult to help a person as poor as genocide widows because when one need is addressed another one comes up. In addition, because of sickness or serious injuries some genocide widows are too weak to get involved in any activity which can help them. While others need to be helped in realizing their potential and using responsibly the resources available to them, so that they build their capacity to respond to the challenges facing them.

In the adapted model of integral human transformation, material growth, which in this chapter is equated to economic needs, comprises those items that we normally think of when discussing development, namely transportation, communication, money, land ownership and land use.³²¹ In the Rwandan context, especially in relation to genocide widows in Kigali-Ville, it is crucial to add safe housing because as it is shown earlier without shelter genocide widows would find it difficult to grow materially. The model also includes land use and ownership for they both influence material growth. One may be tempted to think that this is irrelevant to genocide widows living in an urban

³¹⁸ Illuminée Kanazayire, World Vision, oral interview, May 27, 2004, Kicukiro -Kigali-Ville.

³¹⁹ Rev. Peter Twahirwa, oral interview, June 14, 2004, Remera- Kigali-Ville.

³²⁰ Episcopal Church of Rwanda.

³²¹ Darrel L. Whiteman, “Bible translation and social and cultural development”, p. 125.

area like Kigali-Ville. It is important to note that, in the Rwandan society land is not only regarded as a material thing; it also helps to safeguard personal identity and a sense of belonging. People often inherit land from their parents, and as a result, it is possible to trace one's ancestry or family history. Therefore although some genocide widows are living in urban areas for the reasons we cited in Chapter Three, their interest in land cannot be overlooked because land ownership and use go beyond material satisfaction. Moreover, it is worthy to mention that although some genocide widows left their lands and moved to urban areas it does not mean that they lost the right to their lands. They are only afraid of going back. It is in this respect, Umutoni of IBUKA association told the researcher that they are encouraging genocide widows to go back to their properties, because life in rural areas is likely to be easier than urban areas. It will also help widows to be reintegrated into the society and more importantly to reconcile with their offenders.³²²

There are other elements in the area of personal growth such as empowerment and creativity, which are also relevant to the process of responding to economic needs. This illustrates the importance of balance and interrelation in the metaphor of the wheel of integral human transformation.

5.2. Christian response to health problems

Ten years after the genocide, problems related to poor health of genocide widows are becoming more and more evident mainly because of HIV/AIDS. In Chapter Three we saw how a significant number of genocide widows were raped and infected with HIV/AIDS. Now some of them are suffering from communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, which further weakens them. The problem of HIV/AIDS is having serious consequences on the lives of genocide widows, as it is affecting not only their health but also their economical, social and psychological welfare. This is also a major concern for those who are ministering to them. Like shelter, HIV/AIDS has to be addressed from all perspectives if the ministry to genocide widows is to produce positive results.

³²² Umutoni Brandine, oral interview, August, 2004, Kigali-Ville.

Father Kambanda³²³ of Caritas suggests that genocide widows who are HIV positive, like other poor people can only find strength and comfort in coming together to form groups or associations. When HIV positive widows are in groups or associations, they are easily reached and ministered to by the staff of Christian NGOs and given loans to do small businesses such as commercial activities. As it was noted in the previous section, when widows are busy doing something to improve their lives, their moral strength, confidence and hope are restored, particularly of those infected with HIV/AIDS. At Inkuru Nziza (The Good News Church) there is a project, which works with the poor and the underprivileged in Kigali-Ville.³²⁴ About 200 families of genocide widows who are HIV positive are beneficiaries. Those who are still strong are given loans to run small businesses while those physically weak, or seriously ill receive food and clothes.

In Kigali-Ville, World Relief works with 13 associations of HIV/AIDS infected people and most of them are genocide widows.³²⁵ They receive aid which consists mainly of food items. World Relief works through Christian churches and other Christian organizations such as Solace Ministries, MOUCECORE, A.E.E and Christian Aid. Through small businesses, widows are helped to fight against despair and social stigma attached to HIV/AIDS. When genocide widows or other HIV/AIDS infected people are involved with commercial activities, they go out and interact with other people, for instance at market places. All Christian NGOs lay emphasis on the spiritual support for the genocide widows infected with HIV/AIDS. Fellowship and prayer meetings are organized and genocide widows gather together to pray and share testimonies. Christian NGOs organize for widows to visit their colleagues who are sick in their homes as well as the hospital. At Inkuru Nziza, genocide widows and other people living with HIV/AIDS are enabled to visit their colleagues who are admitted at the hospitals and they also take food items with them.

Although the above assistance is given to widows living with HIV/AIDS, the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs is not given priority. Only a handful of genocide widows have access to anti-retroviral drugs. According to Mukanyirigira, the

³²³ Father Antoine Kambanda, oral interview, August 9, 2004, Nyarugenge (Sainte Famille) Kigali-Ville.

³²⁴ Elijah Kanamugire, oral interview, July 23, 2004, Nyarugenge- Kigali-Ville.

³²⁵ Louise Numviyahagabo, oral interview, July 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

coordinator of AVEGA, out of 628 members who have tested HIV positive, about 30 have access to anti-retroviral drugs.³²⁶ In Kigali-Ville Province, genocide widows who are HIV positive are among the twelve percent³²⁷ of the urban population in Rwanda who are thought to be HIV positive and who are desperate to get access to anti-retroviral drugs. There is no doubt that most, if not all, of the genocide widows who are living with HIV/AIDS cannot afford the anti-retroviral treatment. Nevertheless, according to Umulisa of IBUKA association, many NGOs, both secular and faith-based, are lobbying medical centres to give priority to genocide widows in the provision of anti-retroviral drugs. As it was remarked in Chapter Three, genocide widows need an assurance that when they test HIV positive, they will have access to anti-retroviral treatment. Otherwise HIV/AIDS will continue to be a major problem for those who know their HIV status and those who live in uncertainty as well as those who are trying to help them. This is well observed in the report of **African Rights Working for Justice** which states:

The prospect of treatment is the best means available to persuade people that there is a chance they can manage their illness. The argument that ultimately some individuals may not be candidates for anti-retroviral treatment, and that more limited palliative care may provide the best medical approach, should not be a distraction. Anti-retrovirals are a means to stimulate a collective mental shift, taking AIDS out of the supernatural and into the medical realm.³²⁸

The above observation stresses the importance and urgency of dispensing the anti-retroviral treatment to genocide widows who are rape victims. However there are still many hindrances. Besides limited means to care for all the people living with HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, most genocide widows are still reluctant to go for an HIV test. Others confuse antibiotics with anti-retroviral drugs so when they are given antibiotics for infections they mistakenly think that these are anti-retroviral drugs.³²⁹ Most genocide widows who are HIV positive were infected through rape during the genocide, and experienced social stigma and that is why many would have preferred to keep as a secret but they are falling ill and are urgently in need of medical attention.

³²⁶ Mukanyirigira Consolée, oral interview, April 27, 2004, Remera- Kigali-Ville.

³²⁷ According to John Wesley Kabango, "Church-Based Rural Development: RDIS, Rwanda" p. 169.

³²⁸ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 24.

³²⁹ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 25.

Despite this, some are reluctant to go for medical help because they fear the shame as noted in the report of African Rights Working for Justice:

Women inevitably worry that by seeking treatment they will expose themselves to further upset, humiliation or embarrassment. The prospect of having to discuss their rape with a man, even in this professional context, is daunting and one reason why women have endured illnesses in silence for years.³³⁰

Genocide widows like other genocide survivors get support from FARG³³¹ (Fond d'Assistance aux Rescapés du Genocide) and many of them have a card issued by FARG, which enables them to take the HIV test free of charge in a number of hospitals and clinics.³³²

Due to the reasons stated above however, some are still reluctant to take that step. In addition, they need transport to visit medical centres. When Mukarwego³³³ discovered that she was HIV positive, a friend advised her to visit either the Hospital of Kabwayi (Gitarama province) or Rwamagana (Kibungo province) to get medical assistance but when she thought about traveling expenses she was discouraged and abandoned the idea.

Furthermore, genocide widows who are on anti-retroviral treatment need a good and balanced diet and this is another problem for people living with HIV/AIDS. Notwithstanding the fact that AIDS is still the most dreaded disease, people living with it are still human beings; they need to feel the warmth and comfort from those who surround them, not isolation and stigmatization. They need to work because it makes them feel that they still have a place and role to play in the community. This is what several Christian NGOs are doing through supportive programs, fellowships, visits and prayer meetings with genocide widows.

Some genocide widows are still young and HIV negative or are simply uncertain about their HIV status. If these widows become involved in immoral activities such as prostitution out of frustration and loneliness, there is the possibility that they would

³³⁰ African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 36.

³³¹ Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors.

³³² African Rights Working for Justice, April 2004, p. 25.

³³³ Mukarwego Immacuée, oral interview, June 10, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali- Ville.

highly be exposed to HIV/AIDS infection. It is in this regard that several Christian NGOs have initiated action aimed at this group of people, in order to help them protect themselves from HIV/AIDS scourge. Christian Aid is working in partnership with AVEGA association in their project "Stepping Stones", which aims primarily at behaviour change.³³⁴ They organize seminars with selected members of the association so that trained widows can in their turn help fellow widows. This is an important program for genocide widows not only in relation to HIV/AIDS, but also in relation to their personal dignity and the honour of their dead husbands and families because when they are involved in this program they are likely not to engage themselves in immoral activities and are more likely to live an exemplary life.

According to AVEGA coordinator, widows have to defend their status in the society because no one else will do it for them and they can only do that if they behave in a dignified way.³³⁵ Father Kambanda of Caritas Rwanda indicated that there is a regular meeting which brings together all religious confessions, the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches, to discuss and determine the course of actions against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Christian community in Rwanda has adopted a two-fold policy: preventive action (which targets mainly the youth) and care for the already infected people. Christian NGOs work with and through Christian Churches.

Therefore, Christian NGOs play a key role in helping the Christian community to implement its policies through various programs like establishing the anti-Aids clubs (Clubs Anti-Sida) among the youth. The introduction of Christian perspectives in HIV/AIDS prevention strategies is especially relevant to genocide widows especially those who are still young and resident in urban areas like Kigali-Ville.

As mentioned earlier, HIV/AIDS is a sickness which implies that the medical option must be given priority. One out of twelve widows interviewed in this research who are HIV positive has access to Anti-retroviral treatment. Kagirimpundu is receiving treatment for HIV and Tuberculosis from a medical and social centre run by the Catholic nuns, C.M.S Biryogo (Centre Medical et Social de Biryogo). Although she may be weaker than other widows interviewed and who are living with HIV/AIDS,

³³⁴Yvette Umulisa, oral interview, April 28, 2004, Kicukiro- Kigali-Ville.

³³⁵Mukanyirigira Consolée, oral interview, April 27, 2004, Remera- Kigali-Ville.

there are no indications to suggest that these widows are any better than Kagirimpundu, they also need anti-retroviral treatment.

Solace Ministries runs a medical consultation at their center for the genocide widows. Although they treat many sicknesses including opportunistic infections for people living with HIV/AIDS, they do not dispense anti-retroviral drugs because they are expensive to distribute even for Christian NGOs. Nevertheless Christian organizations can lobby medical centres which give out anti-retroviral drugs to support genocide widows. Given the fact that Christian organizations are more familiar with the underprivileged and people living with HIV/AIDS, their petitions are likely to be considered. We have seen how Christian NGOs distribute foodstuffs, clothes and give moral and spiritual support to HIV/AIDS infected people. There is no doubt that this kind of support is very much needed. However, it is the active participation of Christian NGOs in providing medical solutions that would make a greater difference because if HIV/AIDS is not dealt with adequately the whole process of helping genocide widows will be seriously undermined.

The model of integral human transformation and Whiteman's model identify health as a key element in personal growth. HIV/AIDS scourge impacts not only on the lives of the genocide widows individually but also on the whole Rwandan society. As shown in this section, the problem of HIV/AIDS overlaps other areas of societal life for it is not only a health or personal problem. It also affects social, economical and spiritual growth. Once again this underlines the importance of having a well-balanced approach to transformation.

5. 3. Christian role in reconciling the Rwandan people

In April 1994, all regions of Rwanda were swept by unprecedented violence, which resulted in the genocide of the Tutsi people and the events were so horrendous that people wondered whether the Hutu and Tutsi could live in one country again. In a country which claims to be Christian, one wonders what role religion can play in reconciling the Rwandans. Writing on the Northern Ireland situation, Scott Appleby states,

Drawing on their intimate knowledge of the myths, beliefs, and deepest feelings of the people shaped by religious cultures--including people who may no longer practice the religion in question--religious leaders are poised to promote peace-related values, including friendship, compassion, humility, service, respect for strangers, repentance, forgiveness, and the acceptance of the responsibility for the past errors.³³⁶

These insights are pertinent to the Rwandan situation because religious leaders can use their knowledge of the Rwandan society and their influence to play a key role in the reconciliation of the Rwandans. Appleby goes on to support the above observation by saying that, the concept of reconciliation has deep religious roots and resonance.³³⁷

The Rwandan crisis is complex, and its consequences are devastating to all. Therefore efforts of reconciling the Rwandans should take into consideration the full picture of the crisis, including identification and analysis of the causes and factors that led to the genocide. Most of the Rwandans feel that there is need for reconciliation not only for widows but for all genocide survivors and the rest of the society. All the Christian NGOs interviewed attempted to incorporate in their ministry the process of reconciling Rwandans.

According to Father Kambanda of Caritas, the element of reconciliation was added into Caritas ministry after 1994 in response to the prevailing situation in Rwanda. The problem is that, genocide widows and orphans, have as neighbours those whose husbands and fathers are put in prison for taking part in the genocide. In 1997, all the Catholic Bishops in Rwanda came together and inaugurated a five-year program of reconciliation. In this regard, every Diocese held a synod known as *Gacaca*³³⁸ *Nkirisitu* (Christian Gacaca).

In Kigali Diocese, an objective of *Kurandura Irondakoko* (uprooting the concept of ethnicity) was set because it is believed that "ethnicity" is the major cause of the crisis. Therefore Christians in small church groups are urged to discuss the issue and find a way of resolving this problem of ethnicity which is dividing them.³³⁹ Christian

³³⁶ R. Scott, Appleby. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, p. 169.

³³⁷ R. Scott, Appleby. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, Cummor Hill: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC. 2000, p. 170.

³³⁸ Gacaca is a Rwandan traditional institution of mediation in conflicts of lineages and clans.

³³⁹ Father Gasana Emmanuel Senior Priest of Saint Charles Lwanga, oral interview, June 25, 2004, Nyamirambo- Kigali-Ville.

NGOs such as A.E.E and MOUCECORE believe that in having mixed representation groups (genocide widows, wives and children of genocide prisoners), the reconciliation of the Rwandans is achievable. They identify and discuss their needs together, participate in the same development scheme (small businesses, rotary loans) and, more importantly as Christians, they pray and have fellowship together.

Through this process, widows are gradually reintegrated into the wider community. In Kanombe District, Busanza Sector, the researcher visited a solidarity group called ITUZE supported by A.E.E. ITUZE membership comprised of genocide widows, HIV widows, both Hutu and Tutsi. Besides having fellowship together they also have a scheme of rotary loans. They meet once a week in each member's house.

Rwandans believe that the causes of the crisis are rooted in the history of the country, especially after the arrival of the colonial masters and missionaries because that was when the concept of ethnicity was introduced into Rwandan society, as we have seen in Chapter Two. It is in this regard that some Christian NGOs like REACH identify the teaching of the history of Rwanda as the first step in the process of reconciling the Rwandans. They organize seminars where they teach survivors and others the history of Rwanda prior and after the arrival of the Europeans, and the history of post-independence Rwanda. According to Reverend Fidèle Mugengana,³⁴⁰ emphasis must be placed on helping Rwandans to understand the divide and rule philosophy of the colonial government in which the idea of differences among them (ethnic groups) in terms of origin, physical features, and social organization was forged and introduced by Europeans with the view of dividing them. They emphasize that all Rwandans are one people: ABANYARWANDA.

REACH also teaches people the history of Christianity in Rwanda, the missionary enterprise and how the Catholic missionaries collaborated with colonial rulers, in using the concept of "ethnicity" to protect their interests. After the introduction of Christianity, the Rwandans were further divided as illustrated by development of new vocabulary associated with the different denominations. Catholics became known as

³⁴⁰ Fidèle Mugengana, oral interview, July 21, 2004, Nyarugenge- Kigali-Ville.

Abiroma.³⁴¹ The other terms are: *Abaporoso*³⁴² (the Protestants), *Abahirika*³⁴³ (the Seventh - Day Adventist), and *Abo kwa Mungu Mwema*³⁴⁴ (the Pentecostals). These names further exaggerated the differences Rwandans had between themselves after the arrival of Europeans. Moreover, as it was shown in Chapter Two with the help of the Catholic Church, the Hutu took and monopolized power. Presidents Kayibanda and Habyalimana were both devout Catholics and close to the Catholic Church leadership in Rwanda, whilst the Protestants (*Abaporoso*) were ignored and marginalized by the Catholic dominated regimes. Protestants were accused of being favorable to the Tutsi cause, in spite of the fact that before 1994 the leadership of Protestant churches in Rwanda was overwhelmingly Hutu.³⁴⁵

Christian NGOs such as Solace Ministries, A.E.E, MOUCECORE, REACH, organize prayer meetings, fellowships, seminars, and use biblical teaching with a view to locate the process of reconciliation within a Christian perspective. They regard efforts of reconciling the Rwandans by teaching the history of Rwanda alone as insufficient. For the sake of unity and reconciliation there is the need to place an emphasis on reminding genocide widows, other survivors, and all the Rwandans in general that they are all sons and daughters of one God. Since about 90 percent of the Rwandans claim to be Christians, meaning that they have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, there are no Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, for Paul says, “you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3: 28b).

All the widows interviewed said that they understand the need for reconciliation and are ready to reconcile but they wish to see two things happen: first, people who offended them must repent and ask for forgiveness, and second, they want to know the

³⁴¹ Literally meaning, those belonging to Rome.

³⁴² Literally those belonging to Protestants.

³⁴³ Literally meaning, those pushing down. Traditions say that early missionaries of The Seventy-Day Adventist Church used to offer bulls to congregations and before the slaughter, the bulls were tied up, then, people pushed them down before slaughtering them. That is the reason why the SDA members became known as *Abahirika*.

³⁴⁴ Literally meaning, those belonging to the Good God. *Mungu Mwema* is a Swahili expression meaning, Good God.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Tharcisse Gatwa, “The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994”, chapter, 4, p. 34.

truth about the death of their husbands and children.³⁴⁶ Some widows revealed that they are already in good relationships with those who offended them. Rwandan Christians believe that, if the offenders truly repent and ask for forgiveness and the offended forgive them, there is hope of reconciling the Rwandan people. Kagirimundu, a mother of four and victim of rape and now HIV positive reported that her Christian life has helped her to re-establish good relationships with the rest of the community:

Nyewe nk'umuntu wamenye Imana numva ntakibazo njye ngira cyo kwiyunga nabantu nubu turabana turasangira turasabana, nkubu ndarwara bakamba hafi bakamvuzza, tukagenda, njewe numva nta kibi....kandi baranatubwira ngo utababarira nawe ntazababarirwa.³⁴⁷

As a person who knows God, I see no problem with reconciling with people. Even now we are sharing everything, we fellowship together, and when I am sick they are there for me, they take me to hospital. Personally I see nothing wrong... besides we are taught that a person who does not forgive will not be forgiven.

Many Christian NGOs have initiated programs of ministering to prisoners and their families (wives) especially those held in connection with the genocide, urging them to ask for forgiveness and to tell the truth. By so doing they may be forgiven, and this would help relatives of the genocide victims to get over their grief. Only then can reconciliation be possible. Father Kambanda revealed to the researcher that through frank discussions and mutual understanding in small church groups and other social gatherings, there are encouraging signs of reconciliation among the Rwandans:

mu miryango yagikirisitu abantu biricara bagasubiza amaso inyuma bakareba ibyo banyuzemo. Bakareba amateka ya buri muntu, nay' umuryango we, ibya mubayeho, aba bimuteye, n' impamvu. Abantu bakabiganiraho, iyo umaze kumva ukuri kwa mugenzi wawe, nawe ukumva ukwawe ubwo noneho mwubakira ku kuri, aho ngaho hagiye hava imbuto nyinshi, abantu bagiye batere intambwe yo gusaba imabazi turabafite benshi, buriya byo muri prisons abantu birega ntawo ari ingufu z'amategeko ahubwo ni abantu, bagize urugendo rwo guhinduka (processus de conversion) akagera aho asaba imabazi kandi. Hari abagiye bagira urugendo bakagira intambwe yo kubabarira, turabafite benshi bamaze kugira icyo ntambwe yo kubabarira nabandi bakiri muri urwo rugendo.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ There are still many widows who do not know how and where their husbands were killed. That is why they want to find out so that if possible (because several hundred of victims were thrown into rivers) they can give them decent burial.

³⁴⁷ Jacqueline Kagirimundu, oral interview, July 22, 2004, Nyamirambo- Kigali-Ville.

³⁴⁸ Father Antoine Kambanda, oral interview, August 9, 2004, Nyarugenge- Kigali-Ville.

In small church groups, people come together and look back and see what they went through. They analyze everyone's experience, family experience, what happened to them, and those who are responsible and the reasons why they did it. Then they discuss it and when they have understood each other's reality, they build on that, and it is from these efforts that we are seeing positive fruits. Some people have taken a step of asking forgiveness, we have many of them. In prisons people are confessing not because of the pressure of laws but because these are people who have gone through a process of conversion and have reached a point of asking for forgiveness. We have also many others who went through the same process and have taken a step of forgiving, and others are still going through the process of conversion.

Many Rwandan Christians believe that reconciliation is possible but also acknowledge the fact that it is going to be a long and difficult process as Father Kambanda remarked. Reconciliation is one of the key virtues of the Christian faith. Therefore Christian NGOs are expected to link their ministries to the Christian church mission of preaching forgiveness and reconciliation. Béata a genocide widow and a staff member at Solace Ministries, acknowledged the need for reconciliation. Nevertheless, she also highlights the concerns of genocide widows over the reluctance of some of their offenders to ask for forgiveness.³⁴⁹ However, it is also important to note that some of the survivors want no more than revenge.³⁵⁰ This is another factor, which makes the reconciliation of the Rwandans slow and complicated.

In Whiteman's model, the element of reconciliation is not included. But in a context like that of post-genocide Rwanda, a society which is in the process of recovering from a deep ethnic division, reconciliation is very crucial. Myers describes poverty as broken relationships not only among human beings but also with the environment and God.³⁵¹ Therefore, the process of healing and repairing relations in a divided society implies a response to poverty. Genocide left Rwanda completely impoverished with fractured relationships, which implies that the process of reconciling the Rwandans cannot be narrowly perceived as a way of re-harmonizing human relationships but rather it is a key component in the process of helping the country recover from its poverty related problems. For the Rwandan people to get over the effects of genocide they must reconcile; and for reconciliation to take place there must be repentance and forgiveness. It is also important to note that in a self-confessed Christian society,

³⁴⁹ Béata, oral interview, June 1, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali- Ville.

³⁵⁰ Gatwa Tharcice, "The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994", chapter 7, p. 39.

³⁵¹ Bryant L. Myers, 2000 "The Church and transformational development", p. 64.

reconciliation is not only a social issue but also a spiritual one because it involves the person being reconciled to God. Therefore, although reconciliation is placed in the model of integral human transformation under Social Growth, it is actually pertinent to ALL Four segments of the “Wheel”. Reconciliation affects personal growth and therefore, by implication will influence material (economic) growth.

5. 4. Christian NGOs role in restoring spiritual and emotional welfare of genocide widows

When Cardinal Etchegaray of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace visited Rwanda on behalf of the Pope, he asked assembled Church leaders: “Are you saying that the blood of tribalism is deeper than the waters of baptism?” one leader present answered: “Yes it is.”³⁵²

The above remark is evidence of how real the concept of “tribalism” is among the Rwandans and how superficial the impact of the Christian faith has been on people’s lives. The April 1994 massacres left survivors including Christians in a dilemma and in confusion. They lost confidence and faith in Christians and in the Christian Church as an institution. Places where they had experienced fellowship, companionship, love and comfort became places of betrayal, torture, rape, sufferings and death.³⁵³

In Chapter Three, it was mentioned how some survivors questioned the presence of God during the genocide. In the face of this situation, Rwanda needs spiritual renewal as Michael Nazir Ali, Bishop of Rochester, suggested when he stated that the whole country, “needs to be re-evangelized”.³⁵⁴ In this respect, Christian NGOs through various aspects of their ministries have joined the church in restoring its image as the body of Jesus Christ. Kayitaba of MOUCECORE who is also a genocide survivor, told me that among other things they help survivors to understand that God did not forsake them during their sufferings.

Tubumvisha ko ibyo banyuzemo byose Imana yari kumwe nabo, ibyo turabibereka, tukabumvisha ko nta mbaraga zindi zari kubibashoboza, ko

³⁵² John, Martin 1995, “Rwanda: Why?” pp. 1-2.

³⁵³ During the genocide many victims were killed or raped in or around church buildings. For instance, Sainte Famille parish in Kigali-Ville, Mukarange Parish in Muhazi district Kibungo province, etc.

³⁵⁴ Quoted by John Martin 1995, “Rwanda: Why?” p. 2.

nta muntu wundi wari kubibashoboza, uretse Imana yonyine, noneho babyumva “bati koko hahandi Imana yari yari ihari”.³⁵⁵

We tell them that God was with them in all that they went through, we also tell them that no other power could help them, no person could help them except God, and when they have understood that, they say that ‘indeed God was there with us’.

The above remark is an indication of the challenge the Christian community in Rwanda is facing in helping the survivors (genocide widows in this case) to understand that God suffered with them during the tragedy. Although God suffered with them and the crisis is over, these victims continue to experience the aftermath of the tragedy in many ways including trauma, sickness and other forms of poverty. Therefore they need to continue experiencing God’s presence through the expression of love and compassion by Christians towards them.

We have seen how Rwanda, prior to genocide, was highly praised for its Christian history but after the tragedy, Christianity in Rwanda came under serious scrutiny, including the understanding of sin. John Martin contends that the churches tended to focus more on private morality, “Don’t lie, drink, smoke, or commit adultery,” but had “no understanding of structural evil or corporate sin manifest in genocide”.³⁵⁶ The problem of Rwanda as we have seen is rooted in the history of the country, therefore churches and Christian NGOs face a challenge to preach forgiveness, mutual understanding, love, compassion and of communicating how the blood of Jesus Christ is “thicker” than tribalism. If this was done, they would be laying a solid foundation for unity and reconciliation among Rwandans.

Restoring the image of the Christian community as a body of love and compassion, a body which can listen, understand, and sympathize with the sufferers is also a challenge to Christian NGOs. During genocide, families were decimated and one of the consequences is that some of the victims were left with no close relative, no person with whom they could trust and share their experiences, and no person who was ready and willing to listen to them. In addition to that, they needed to meet as victims of genocide and talk about their experiences. Christian NGOs in collaboration with churches are assisting genocide widows to resolve this problem. Mukandutiye, a

³⁵⁵ Kayitaba Michel, oral interview, May 11, 2004, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

³⁵⁶ John Martin. “Rwanda: Why?” p. 2

genocide widow who is also HIV positive, said that she has now found a new family in Solace Ministries:

Nari umuntu wihebye cyane ariko Imana yankuyemo kwiheba impa abavandimwe hano muri Solaces, abakozi bahano babaye abavandimwe (basaza & bakuru) banjye ni abantu bampuriye cyane, nabandi dusengana hano muri Solace iyo turi kumwe numva nidagaduye, nishimye, kubona abo tunganira kuko ubundi numvaga ndi mw'icura burindi, nkumva nta numuntu wanyumva mbese agahinda ari kenshi.³⁵⁷

I was very desperate but God took me out of desperation and gave me a new family. Here in Solace Ministries, workers have become my brothers and sisters, they comforted me and other people whom we pray with and when we are together I fell free and happy to have people to talk with, because I was in darkness and I was thinking that no one could listen to me because of too much grief.

Solace Ministries organizes fellowships for genocide widows twice a month. They come together, fellowship, pray and share their testimonies. These gatherings help the widows to have a sense of belonging, love, and understanding. Resource persons are invited to talk to them about various issues like forgiveness, purposefulness and reconciliation.

It is in these or similar gatherings that Christian NGOs address emotional problems. Genocide widows come together and talk freely about their ordeal, how they were beaten, raped and humiliated. They listen to each other, cry together and comfort one other. According to NGOs such as MOUCECORE, Solace Ministries, REACH and World Vision, this ministry has helped emotionally disturbed widows significantly. Niyobuhungiro is a genocide widow with three children and she is one of the few with permanent employment. She is an accountant in a vocation training school. After the genocide, Niyobuhungiro was so traumatized that she did not know where to go or what to do:

Hari igihe cyabaye ukumva ntuzi uwo uri we naho uri, niba unari ho, ukumva ntuzi ibyo urimo, ndabyita kwiyoberwa ---nta murungo w'ubuzima, nta byiringiro by'ubuzima. Nyuma ya marorerwa urebye namaze igihe kinini meze uko, urumva nyine akaga kambere nukubona utazi icyo ugomba gukora, usa nusinziye ari ibyiza nibibi ukabona birakurenze.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ Marthe Mukandutiye, oral interview, June 10, 2004, Kacyiru- Kigali-Ville.

³⁵⁸ Esther Niyobuhungiro, oral interview, June 21, 2004, Gikondo- Kigali-Ville.

There was time when we did not know who and where we were or whether we were indeed alive. We did not know what we were doing, we could not recognize ourselves-- there was no purpose, no hope in life. After genocide I was like that for a long time. As you can imagine, the worst thing is not knowing what to do, a person does not seem to recognize what is around whether bad or good, nothing seemed to matter.

Niyobuhungiro brings out the importance of meeting with others victims of genocide,

Ntabwo nakubwira ngo sinkizi aho mva naho njya. Kuganira rero biri mu miti, --- guhura nabandi, ari abo muhuje ibibazo nabantu b'Imana, cg se nabandi muri rusange, ari abantu bafite ibitekerezo, kuganira ibyabaye ni bimwe mu byangaruye mu nzira, --- twabiganiragaho uko bucyeye uko bwije gusenga, gahoro gahoro ku buryo nyuma y'imyaka cumi numva ntakimeze nkuko nari meze.³⁵⁹

I cannot tell you that I still do not know which direction to take. Talking was one of the solutions--- meeting with other people including those with similar problems, people of God, and other people with good ideas, and talking about what happened to us is one of the things that brought me back to my senses. We talked about it day in day out and prayed and I am no longer the way I was, ten years later.

According to Kanazayire³⁶⁰ of World Vision, the emotional disturbance of genocide widows was particularly noticeable in the first three years after genocide (relief period). Because during that time some widows were not willing to move into houses built for them, whilst others would not sow seeds given to them. After an investigation they realized that these widows had not recovered from the loss of their husbands, children and dignity. They were overwhelmed emotionally. As a result, World Vision initiated a program which helps widows to manage and control their emotions, (gestion des émotions)" or *kwiga icyunamo*. In collaboration with AVEGA association, widows are trained through seminars. Kanazayire also remarked that the aim was to enable genocide widows to meet as a group, so that they could talk and freely share their experiences during the genocide. By so doing, they would be relieved of anger, frustration and guilty consciences. This would help them to recover their self-esteem, desire for life and as Kanazayire said, "after that widows are ready to reintegrate into the community because they have come into terms with the loss and are ready to work and move on with their lives.

According to Father Gasana³⁶¹ of Saint Charles Lwanga parish Nyamirambo, his parish has a genocide widows' association called *Abiragije Kirisito*³⁶² with about 500

³⁵⁹ Esther Niyobuhungiro, oral interview, June 21, 2004, Gikondo- Kigali-Ville.

³⁶⁰ Kanazayire Illuminée, oral interview, May 27, 2004, Kicukiro- Kigali-Ville.

³⁶¹ Father Emmanuel Gasana, oral Interview, June 25, 2004, Nyamirambo- Kigali-Ville.

members. Besides engaging in activities such as weaving, they meet every second week of the month to pray and fellowship together. They are also taught how to get over their loss and guilty consciences and how to control their emotions (*gestion des emotions*) through dialogue and discussions. This initiative not only helps genocide widows vis-à-vis their individual lives, but also it helps them to reintegrate and reconcile with the rest of the community. Many Christian NGOs are involved in this program of helping emotionally disturbed genocide survivors through training of counselors, and organizing meetings for the victims to talk. According to Father Kambanda³⁶³ of Caritas Rwanda, emotionally disturbed victims who get help from Christian programs make more steady progress than those who are taken into psychiatric centres.

Nevertheless, despite the efforts of Christian NGOs in helping traumatized genocide survivors, widows who so far have benefited from these efforts are still relatively few.³⁶⁴ Therefore, it is a challenge to the Christian community in general, and Christian NGOs in particular, to identify those widows who still need help and extend this ministry to them.

In the model of integral human transformation, spirituality encompasses elements such as love, prayer, hope, peace and faith, which makes it relevant to many contexts such as Rwanda. Following the events of 1994, however Rwanda's context was completely altered. In this regard therefore, for the Rwandans to get over their bitter ethnic divisions and live again like one Christian entity, repentance and forgiveness have to feature prominently in their spiritual life.

³⁶² "Those who are under Christ's guidance".

³⁶³ Father Antoine Kambanda, oral interview, August 9, 2004, Nyarugenge- Kigali-Ville.

³⁶⁴ Kanazayire Illuminée, oral interview, May 27, Kicukiro- Kigali-Ville.

5.5. Conclusion.

This chapter has sought to look at how Christian NGOs are responding to various needs of genocide widows. Rwanda is left with the effects of the genocide which would linger on for many years. Every one is affected but as we have seen women are the most affected and they form the most vulnerable group. Genocide widows have many problems which are intertwined, therefore responding to one or some of them, and ignoring others would only compound their lives rather than helping them to overcome their difficulties.

In this chapter we have attempted to assess the efforts of Christian NGOs in the light of a model of integral human transformation, which recognizes the importance of balance in the growth of the different components of the human community. The notion of balanced and holistic transformation is relevant to the plight of genocide widows in Kigali-Ville whose problems are many and inter-related. The model of integral human transformation has been adapted from Whiteman's model of Integral Human Development, which suggests that the focus of *development is people*.³⁶⁵

In other words, the beneficiaries are empowered to be responsible and more resourceful participants in the process of transformation. The model of integral human transformation also lays an emphasis on spiritual dimension and moral values. These characteristics are relevant to the Rwandan situation because Christian NGOs are seeking to enable genocide widows to regain better control of their own lives and environment. Furthermore, by locating the help within a Christian perspective, NGOs are helping genocide widows to consider their spiritual needs.

After the crisis, Christian NGOs working in Rwanda took the step of responding to human needs by offering relief services. Genocide widows, among others, were homeless, hungry, naked and injured. Therefore during the three years after the crisis, houses were built, others were renovated, and food, blankets, clothes and money were given with the view to meeting the immediate needs of the survivors.

³⁶⁵ Darrel L. Whiteman, "Bible translation and social and cultural development" p. 127

Subsequently, Christian NGOs initiated programs of long-term sustainability, through funding income generating activities. They assisted genocide widows in reclaiming the responsibility for their own lives by transforming their predicament into a situation of hope, confidence and purpose.

Although Christian NGOs have the vision and the will to assist genocide widows transform their predicament into a better situation, their efforts are hampered by a number of shortcomings. These include limited means, particularly those related to financial and human resources. This affects considerably the plans of Christian NGOs to meet various needs of genocide widows namely economic and health related needs. In addition there is still lack of sufficient coordination and unison of efforts among Christian organizations, yet this is crucial for the success of their ministry because they all share the same course of helping the poor and all work for the glory of God.

Christian churches and Christian organizations are still the most powerful social institutions in Rwanda. This means that even in the situation where they are not able to use their own resources to meet the needs of the poor, they can use their influence in the society to ensure that the poor, the widows and orphans are treated like people who are created in the image of God.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0. Introduction

In concluding this dissertation which has investigated the response of Christian NGOs to the needs of genocide widows, we will return to the six objectives outlined in Chapter 1 and represent the findings related to each objective. This chapter will also point out recommendations and strategies which might be useful not only to Christian NGOs involved in the ministry to genocide widows, but also to other bodies involved in a similar ministry of genocide widows as well as other vulnerable groups.

6.1. Findings of the research

The first objective was to discuss the factors behind the plight of genocide widows in Rwanda. After analyzing the background to the genocide this study established that the issue of ethnicity which is the main factor behind the divisions among the Rwandans is a recent development in the history of the country. Although introduced and exploited by colonizers and Church leaders to protect their interests, indigenous politicians also accepted and used it to design discriminatory measures which eventually led to the genocide in 1994.

The second objective was to investigate the role of the Christian community in Kigali-Ville in creating awareness about the plight of genocide widows. This study established the fact that the events of April 1994 left the survivors including the widows with many problems. In addition to losing their husbands, genocide widows lost property, were beaten and injured, raped, lost confidence in their personal and social relationships and were psychologically and spiritually affected. In brief, genocide widows were left in total poverty. This study also found out that Christian NGOs have put in place mechanisms of creating awareness about the plight of genocide widows within the Rwandan society in general and Christian community in particular. Christian NGOs create that awareness through urging people (mostly

Christians in their neighborhood, small church groups, prayer groups and other social gatherings) to know and meet one another's needs with particular emphasis on the vulnerable among whom genocide widows. When this occurs, Christian NGOs come in as facilitators with the aim of complementing those efforts.

The third, the fourth and the fifth objectives concern different aspects of the Christian response to genocide widows' plight namely: to explore the mechanisms that the Christian community in Rwanda has established to help widows of April 1994 genocide recover from their trauma; to evaluate the contribution of the Christian NGOs in helping genocide widows to regain their social status, justice and dignity; and to analyze how the Christian community is facilitating reconciliation of the widows with their offenders and the rest of the Rwandan society.

This study found evidence of deep depression among genocide widows after the genocide. Eleven years after the tragedy, in spite of commendable efforts directed towards helping those emotionally disturbed, many widows still need help. In this regard this study found out that Christian NGOs have established various mechanisms of helping emotionally damaged genocide widows, namely through fellowships, prayer meetings and emotions control sessions (*gestion des émotions*).

This study also found out that Christian NGOs have put in place different strategies to help genocide widows to regain their social status, justice and dignity. This has been done through various activities, including income generating activities and social gatherings which also foster the process of emotional healing and reconciliation between the offended and the offenders.

In evaluating the role of NGOs, the researcher examined the issues surrounding the term "development" and highlighted the reasons why the concept of transformation is considered to be an appropriate measuring tool for Christian response to human needs. Using the adapted model of integral human transformation, this study investigated the response of Christian NGOs to the needs of genocide widows with particular emphasis not only on effectiveness but also on the balance of the efforts directed towards various problems facing genocide widows. The adapted model of integral human transformation submits the importance of treating all the needs equally which makes it

relevant to genocide widows' context whose needs are many and inter-related. From emergency period to long-term programs, this study noted the following areas of effectiveness as well as the shortcomings of Christian NGOs in their endeavour to respond to the needs of genocide widows.

Christian NGOs have established adequate mechanisms to respond to the needs of genocide widows. In addition, they have mobilized available human and financial resources to implement their programs of meeting genocide widows' needs. This finding was confirmed by the control group which was composed of three Churches namely the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Good News Church.

Christian Churches have among their obligations to care for the vulnerable people among them widows and orphans, but unlike Christian NGOs their efforts are often hampered by lack of sufficient human and financial resources.

Nevertheless in the light of the churches regular and close relationships with the poor among them genocide widows and also based on their collaboration with Christian NGOs, churches validated the assumptions of this study, which were: widows in Kigali-Ville province suffer socially, spiritually and economically due to the experiences of April 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Christian NGOs operating in Kigali-Ville have responded to genocide widows' social, economic, spiritual and psychological needs; the Christian community has facilitated reconciliation of genocide widows with their offenders and the rest of the Rwandan society; and the Christian community has established various mechanisms to help genocide widows to recover from their trauma.

This study also established that the main difference between Christian NGOs and secular NGOs or other secular bodies in relation to responding to the needs of genocide widows is that Christian NGOs emphasize the spiritual aspect of a person's life. In particular they focus their efforts on restoring broken relationships both horizontal (between people) and vertical (between people and God) through fellowships, visits and prayer meetings.

The Sixth objective was, to provide strategies that may be used by Christian NGOs, the Church and other policy makers in providing more effective and holistic ministry to genocide widows. In general, this study established that Christian NGOs and other bodies involved in helping vulnerable people in Rwanda among them genocide widows need to improve on their strategies of dealing with poverty if indeed their strive is to transform the predicament of genocide widows into a better situation. The following section outlines recommendations and strategies that may enable Christian NGOs, the Church and other policy makers to serve genocide widows more effectively and holistically.

6.2. Recommendations

The inhuman treatment the genocide widows were put through resulted not only in loss of their human dignity but also in breaking down of the divine and privileged relationships between them and God which genocide widows ought to enjoy. Christians in Rwanda are assisting genocide widows to repair and restore these broken relationships.

However, all efforts of restoring and repairing broken relationships would be in vain if the beneficiaries themselves following their inhuman treatment do not believe that they have been created in the image of God.¹ It is in this respect that Dr. Abraham Berinyuu who worked in the aftermath of the Dagomba and Konkomba crisis in the northern part of Ghana in early 1990s suggests that Christian NGOs are in a position to help the victims realize that the image of God cannot be diminished regardless of what a person went through.² After the genocide many survivors including widows questioned indeed the presence of God during the tragedy because of their experience of deep shame through their broken bodies and shattered spiritual beliefs.³

¹ The image of God also means the image of Christ and that means Christ identified with the widows in their suffering because of his suffering on the cross.

² Dr. Abraham Berinyuu, oral interviews, November 1, 2004, Accra-Ghana.

³ Kayitaba Michel, oral interview, May 11, 2004, Kacyiru, Kigali-Ville.

Nevertheless, Christ has identified with their shame and brokenness as illustrated in Heb 12: 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Furthermore, Berinyuu suggests that in order to sufficiently help victims such as the Rwandan genocide widows who went through various sorts of abuse,⁴ particular emphasis must be put on affirming the image of God in them. When genocide widows realize that indeed they are created in the image of God and that nothing can take it from them, then it gives them a renewed basis to live a redeemed life. It is recommended that the Christian community in Rwanda help the survivors understand their sufferings during the genocide in the light of Christ's suffering on the cross, in so doing the survivors will not only be affirming the image of Christ that is in them but also it will constitute a solid basis to believe that God never forsook them.

Second, for Christians in Rwanda to put the Gospel in action in response to the needs of the poor and the vulnerable, they themselves and the Rwandan society in general must respond to the Gospel of Christ. There is a need to understand "conversion" in the sense that Andrew Walls depicts it when he states:

Conversion is the turning, the re-orientation, of every aspect of the humanity--culture-specific-humanity-- to God. For Christ was the full expression of God in human medium. Of its nature, then, conversion is not a single aoristic⁵ act, but a process. It has a beginning; we cannot presume to posit an end.⁶

As Walls has rightly pointed out in the above-cited definition, conversion does not focus on only one act of turning around a person's soul. Indeed, conversion is not just a matter of "don't drink or don't smoke" etc. Rather it impacts every facet of individual and community life related to body, soul, mind and spirit.

⁴ And are still understandably reluctant to publicly say what happened to them. Except of course some who are living with AIDS and who are caught in a double dilemma because on the one hand they would like to keep it as a secret, but on the other hand they need urgent medical help.

⁵ It means that is not a single past action that has an indefinite limit.

⁶ Andrew Walls, "The Translation Principle in Christian History" in P. Stine (ed), *Bible Translation and the spread of the Church: the last 200 years*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 199, p. 25, quoted by Allison M. Howell, *The Religious Itinerary of a Ghanaian People: The Kasena and the Christian Gospel*, Accra: Africa Christian Press, 2001, reprinted with permission from Peter Lang, p. 278.

In the light of above-mentioned assertion, it is recommended that Christian NGOs have an obligation to answer some missiological questions, such as, what does it mean to be a Christian in Rwanda? What does conversion mean to Rwandans? Reverend Jorg Zimmerman writing after the genocide stressed the need of re-evangelizing Rwanda and at the same time he acknowledged that the Rwandans are not ready yet:

What I witnessed was a sort of collective psychological repression phenomenon. Rwanda has to be re-evangelised and quite differently if we do not want such carnages to come back regularly. But unfortunately, the minds are not ripe yet.⁷

As it has been observed earlier, genocide took place when Rwanda was only six years away from celebrating her first centenary of the Gospel. In that period various Christian missions established in different parts of the country at the beginning of the 20th century worked hard to make Christianity a dominant feature of the Rwandan society but genocide brought their efforts under serious question.

In the light of ethnic tensions that have characterized Rwandan history since the 1950s and also considering Andrew Walls' theory of "Discipleship and Nationhood" one may wonder whether the Rwandan society has truly been "discipled" as it claims to have been. Walls argues that:

Discipling a nation involves Christ's entry into the nation's thought, the patterns of relationship within the nation, the way the society hangs together, the way decisions are made.⁸

Indeed if the teachings of Jesus Christ had penetrated the thought and the beliefs of the Rwandans about the way the Hutu and the Tutsi relate to each other and the way decisions have been made by those in power over the years relating to either of the groups, then, would the genocide in April 1994 have taken place? This therefore is a challenge to the Rwandans both individually and as members of the body of Christ. The healing of the divisions that exist in the Rwandan society which have been exacerbated by genocide cannot only be perceived as just some futuristic reality, that:

⁷ Rev. Jorg Zimmerman quoted by Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of Genocide (1959-1994)*, p. 252.

⁸ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, New York: Maryknoll, 1996, p. 51.

one day there will be a healing. Rather the Rwandans cannot wait the second coming of Jesus to heal and overcome all the divisions they suffered during and in the aftermath of the crisis. On the contrary, as Christians inspired by the work of Jesus on the cross, they are called as Schaeffer noted, to “do what can bring forth substantial healing,”⁹ and transform the Rwandan society into a pleasing place to live in because that is what God intends for humanity. This study recommends that the Rwandan Christians and the Church as whole re-examine their understanding of the notion of conversion and discipleship in the light of the above assertion.

Third, as it has been observed in this study, many Rwandans believe that the Rwandan society will regain its normal functioning when people are able to reconcile, in other words when all the divisions in the Rwandan society are healed. The Rwandans need to work towards a substantial healing through a culture of dialogue, through frank and free discussion about their past experiences and have the courage to repent and forgive one another. For all this to happen therefore, as a nation, we need to rediscover and live with the reality of our history. It is recommended that the Rwandans learn about Rwandan history both prior and post the arrival of Europeans, because prior to the arrival of the Europeans all “ethnic” groups formed one united people behind the King, who was a uniting figure beyond any “ethnic” affiliation. The Europeans introduced and used the issue of “ethnicity” to further their cause at the expense of the unity of the indigenous people. However, Rwandans, too, need to face the reality that local politicians, shortly before the independence of Rwanda and afterwards built their socio-political strategies along invented “ethnic” differences, which eventually led to the genocide in 1994.

One way of helping the Rwandans to accept and live with the reality of their history is to use story telling and proverbs. Although story telling and the use of proverbs are not alien to Rwandan tradition, they have not been a prominent feature in western-style education. In view of the nature of the Rwandan crisis, story telling and proverbs can help the Rwandans in their efforts to reconcile. Duane Elmer illustrates how storytelling can be useful in conflict resolution:

⁹ Francis Schaeffer and U. Middlemann, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, p. 66.

¹⁰ Francis Schaeffer and U. Middlemann, *Pollution and the Death of Man*, p. 67.

Storytelling ... is not simply the use of stories but, in a broader sense, the instructional, corrective and nuanced use of words. Thus storytelling includes parables, legends, fables, proverbs, forms of role-play, allegory and, of course, stories. These various means frequently serve to socialize the younger members of a society into the norms and values of that society.¹¹

There are still some issues of contention among the Rwandans namely the relationships between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Unless these issues are dealt with and brought from the realm of “taboos” and “myths” into normal issues of human relationships, Rwandans will always find it difficult to move on as one people. Nevertheless it is possible through social activities such as Culture-drama to “demystify” the Hutu and Tutsi relationships. John P. Kirby, researching on the conflicts between the Konkomba and Dagomba in the north of Ghana, defines Culture-drama as “a new, socially therapeutic enactment genre which aims at transforming the social and cultural systems at their roots.”¹² Culture-drama has aspects that can be relevant and advantageous to the Rwandan situation. Kirby highlights the advantages of culture-drama in an inter-ethnic conflict situation:

The key to its success is that it does not aim at the super sensitive issues of inequities, injustice or the conflicting claims to scarce resources directly but it rather pierces deep into the structural issues, lays them bare and actually begins to resolve the imbalances through enactment. Issues that no one could touch before are suddenly resolved in drama almost before anyone realizes what has happened.¹³

In the light of what the Catholic Church did in 1997 by initiating the “Christian Gacaca” and also the fact that since 2001 the Rwandan government has instituted the “Gacaca courts” throughout the country, this study recommends that all Christian churches and Christian faith based organizations join this national wide program of bringing justice to the victims and reconciling the Rwandans. The “Gacaca courts” model was drawn from the Rwandan traditional Gacaca.

The Christian community in Rwanda is expected to contribute to the success of “Gacaca courts” by bringing in Christian values such as patience, self-control,

¹¹ Duane Emer, *Cross-cultural Conflict Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1993, p.99.

¹² John P. Kirby, *Culture-Drama and Peacebuilding: A culture-drama workbook*, Tamale institute of cross-cultural studies, 2002, p. 6.

¹³ John P. Kirby, *Culture-Drama and Peacebuilding: A Culture-drama workbook*, p. 10.

truthfulness, repentance and forgiveness etc... that are much needed to ensure the success of the process of reconciling the Rwandans.

Fourth, in chapter two this study established the role played by different bodies such as the government, state-sponsored schools, and Churches in promoting divisions among the Rwandans along "ethnic" lines which led to the genocide. This study recommends that Christian NGOs work closely with the same bodies to correct errors of the past and join their efforts to teach and interpret the history of Rwanda in a way that furthers the unity of the Rwandans.

Fifth, all the genocide widows interviewed noted that if Christian NGOs involved in helping genocide widows put their efforts together, it would significantly improve their services in terms of reaching out to widows, defining policies and strategies and setting up priorities. Therefore, this study recommends that those Christian NGOs who are not already part of the existing Rwandan Network of Christian NGOs join it in order to be more effectively involved in poverty reduction and the fight against AIDS.

Sixth, this study recommends that Christian NGOs put particular emphasis on changing their approach to the way they work with widows and the terminology they use with them in Kinyarwanda. Some services of Christian NGOs have created an impression in the minds of widows that the NGOs are only there for the purpose of getting handouts. This understanding has aggravated the poverty of widows by turning them into almost permanent "beggars" as each day they move from one NGO to another looking for aid.

If changes do not occur genocide widows will not mentally move from the context of victims and destitution to a situation where they are able to live a more fulfilled life.

Seventh, this study recommends that NGOs involved in helping genocide widows take into consideration the need to help widows become responsible and more resourceful. This involves Christian NGOs further empowering genocide widows, in order to help them build their confidence and competitiveness. For instance genocide widows who are still young and educated, particularly those living in urban areas, could be introduced to computer and management skills which might give them a much needed

extra edge in their quest to regain their right place in the society as people who still have something to offer. As for those genocide widows without formal educational background special programs can be designed to give them informal education where they can learn knowledge and skills that can help them to create and successfully run income generating activities such as tailoring, bakery, restaurants... by providing this form of education Christian NGOs would be helping these widows to regain their self-esteem hence own the process of transforming their current situation into a better one.

Eighth, in Chapter One it was noted that the problem of widowhood is always closely linked to the problem of orphans particularly in a post-conflict context and in this era of HIV/AIDS. This study was only able to focus on widowhood. However, further study is recommended on the situation of orphans with particular emphasis on households headed by children because their number is constantly increasing as HIV/AIDS continues to claim more lives throughout the country.

Ninth, this study recommends that further studies be done in the area of widowers of genocide to determine why their situation does not appear to be as problematic as that of widows. The findings of the study might provide insight to the area of gender promotion and equality.

Tenth, this study recommends that Christian NGOs and Churches use the wheel of integral human transformation as a possible tool to help them evaluate their own effectiveness in ministry and see whether their contribution towards genocide widows needs leads to a more balanced life situation.

6.3. Hindrances and weaknesses

Notwithstanding sincere endorsement of tremendous efforts made by the Christian NGOs in supporting genocide widows, this study established the following hindrances and weaknesses Christian NGOs are faced with, in their approaches as they attempt to help genocide widows get back to their feet.

Firstly, Christian NGOs have limited financial means considering the needs of widows in areas such as the building and repairing houses, funding income generating activities, and provision of anti-retroviral drugs, all of which require substantial funding. Secondly, there is the lack of sufficient and well-qualified personnel to reach out to widows and address their needs professionally.

Thirdly, there is lack of sufficient basic information about genocide widows' plight: their location, their needs and their wishes. It is also worthy to note the lack of enough of documentation on the topic of working with widows especially in areas such as counseling, reconciliation, determining and understanding widows' needs etc. The little documentation available can only be used by a handful of those interested or involved in the matter.

Fourthly, there is lack of effective collaboration among all groups involved in the ministry in terms of sharing information, drawing strategies, setting priorities to name but a few.

In conclusion, the completion of this work has been inspirational and insightful to the researcher personally. Some genocide widows interviewed in this study gave the researcher the impression that they saw new prospects for life after the genocide that had dashed all their hopes and dreams to nothing eleven years ago. The fact that some widows, who experienced rape and who are living with HIV/AIDS are witnessing the Christian community reaching out to them and helping them see value in life again gives the widows a sense of hope for better possibilities in the future. It is also a sign of encouragement to other genocide widows.

As a Rwandan and a Christian, the researcher was able to realize how much the Christian community inspired by the work of Christ can accomplish not only in terms of preventing social strife but also in helping victims and survivors. In addition, the researcher was able to understand that notwithstanding the problem of limited means and resources which hamper the work of NGOs significantly, the word of God which is a "map" of life gives us deep understanding about and responding to the problems of corporate sin and structural evil in the society. It is this understanding of the word of God that generates the spirit of togetherness which gives hope that God can indeed bring substantial healing to the Rwandan society.

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Appendix 1

Research questionnaire

(For NGO staff)

I. Date:.....

III Place:.....

Respondent's Profile

I. Name:.....

II. Name of the Organization:.....

III. Position:.....

IV. Place of work:.....

Questions

1. When did this organization start to work in Rwanda?
2. What are its objectives?
3. (If the organization started before April 1994). Did the April 1994 genocide make any difference in relation to your ministry to widows? If yes, give reasons.
4. What are their (widows) needs?
5. Do you assist the genocide widows to meet all the needs that you have identified? If yes, How? If no, what are your priorities and why?
6. What do you do when widows have different priorities?
7. In Kigali-Ville how many genocide widows benefit from your services?
8. Which churches do you work with, and how?
9. Do you cooperate with other organizations ministering to the same people? If yes, how? If no, why?
10. Do you have programs of creating awareness concerning specific problems of Genocide widows? If yes, how do you do it?
11. Do you assist genocide widows in the process of national reconciliation? If yes, how?
12. What are the challenges?

Appendix 2
Research questionnaire
(For Widows)

I. Date:.....

III Place:.....

Respondent's Profile

I. Name:.....(Optional)

II. Place of residence:.....

III. Occupation:.....

IV. Religion:.....

V. Number of children:.....

Questions

1. In the aftermath of the genocide what were your pressing needs?
2. It is now ten years after the genocide, what changed? What are your priorities now?
3. Do you get assistance from Christian organization(s)? If yes which one (s)?
4. How and when did the organization(s) come into contact with you?
5. How and in which area(s) are they assisting you?
6. Did you discuss with them about your needs?
7. Is there any church, which is assisting you? If yes, how?
8. Do Christian organizations assist you in the national program of reconciliation? If yes, how?
9. In your view are Christian organizations doing enough?
10. What are your suggestions?

Appendix 3
Research questionnaire

(For churches)

I. Date:.....

III Place:.....

Respondent's Profile

I. Name:.....

II. Name of Parish:.....

III. Denomination:.....

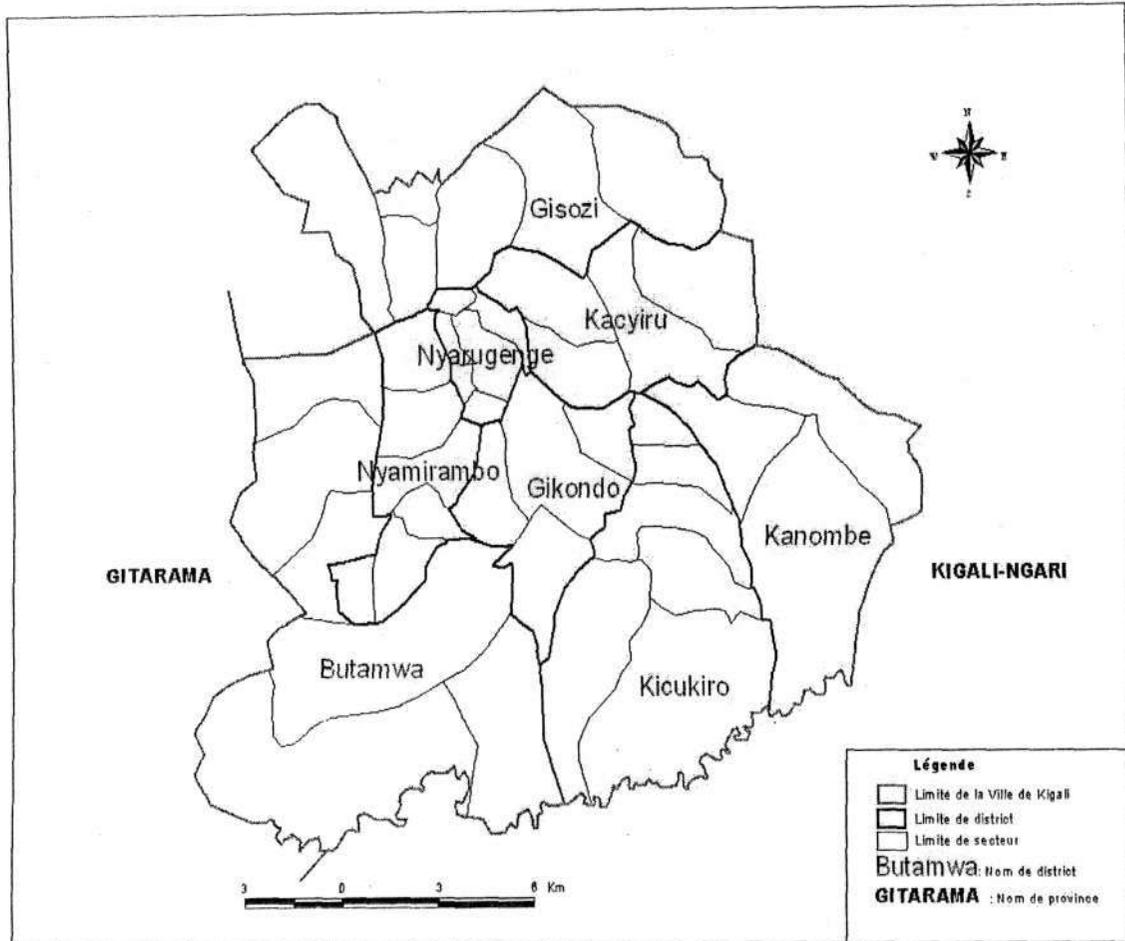
IV. Position:.....

Questions

1. Did the April 1994 genocide make any difference in relation to the way you minister to widows? If yes, what are the reasons?
2. Do genocide widows have specific needs? If yes, what are they?
3. In your parish, do Christians know that it is their obligation to help widows? If yes, do they know that genocide widows have specific problems? What is their response to the plight of genocide Widow? If no, what do you do to create awareness about genocide widows' plight?
4. In what ways do you assist the genocide widows? Do you have priorities? If yes, what are they and why?
5. Do you work with Christian organizations that assist genocide widows? If yes, which one(s) and how?
6. In your view are their (NGOs) ministries to genocide widows relevant and efficient? Are they doing enough?
7. In your view what should they do to improve on their service to genocide widows?
8. Do you assist genocide widows in the process national of reconciliation? If yes, how?
9. In your view ten years after genocide what are the challenges both for the widows and those who assist them?

9. Maps

Kigali-Ville



Source: Minitracro-Unr, *Cartes Administratives du Rwanda*, 2001.¹

¹ Minitracro-Unr stands for Ministère du Transport et du Commerce- Université Nationale du Rwanda.

Rwanda



Source: Minitraco-Unr, *Cartes Administratives du Rwanda*, 2001.

10. List of Informants

Names	Age	Occupation	Date and Place of Interview
Rev. Dr. Abraham Berinyuu	52	Pastor	1/11/ 2004, Accra-Ghana
Agnes Umuziga	45	House wife	20/04/2004, Kanombe
Fr. Antoine Kambanda	40	Priest, Director of Caritas	09/08/2004, Nyarugenge
Béata	44	Solace Ministries staff	1/06/2004, Kacyiru
Ben Kayumba	45	Solace Ministries staff	21/04/2004, Kacyiru
Brandine Umutoni	26	Ibuka staff	10/08/ 2004, Nyarugenge
Consolée Mukanyirigira	43	Avega Coordinator	27/04/2004, Remera
Elijah Kanamugire	48	Project Administrator	23/07/ 2004, Nyarugenge
Fr. Emmanuel Gasana	41	Priest	25/06/2004, Nyamirambo
Esther Niyobuhungiro	40	Accountant	21/06/2004, Gikondo
Rev. Fidèle Mugengana	47	Pastor	21/07/2004, Nyarugenge
Florence Dusabe	42	Moucecore staff	13/05/2004, Kacyiru
Gertrude Kamaraba	55	House wife	20/04/2004, Kanombe
Illuninée Kanazayire	38	World Vision staff	27/05/2004, Kicukiro
Immaculée Mukarwego	40	House wife	10/06/2004, Kicukiro
Jacqueline Kagirimpundu	41	House wife	22/07/ 2004, Nyamirambo
Japhet Ndoriyobijya	41	Pastor	20/04/2004, Remera
Louise Numviyabagabo	39	World Relief staff	20/07/2004, Kacyiru
Marthe Mukandutiye	43	House wife	10/06/2004, Kacyiru
Michel Kayitaba	48	Director of Moucecore	11/05/200, Kacyiru
Oliver Mukashema	27	House wife	15/05/2004, Kimironko
Rev. Canon Peter Twahirwa	48	Pastor	14/06/2004, Remera
Réne Muremangingo	46	AEE staff	14/04/2004, Remera
Vénant Nzabonimana	45	Christian Aid staff	28/04/2004, Kicukiro
Véréna Mukayiranga	46	House wife	15/05/2004, Kacyiru
Yvette Habineza Umulisa	35	Christian Aid staff	28/04/2004, Kicukiro