

GOD COMES HOME TO RWANDA: A CASE STUDY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

by

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Abstract

After the genocide of 1994, Rwanda was left in a state of chaos. With reconciliation as a national priority, Christian faith-based organizations have risen to the challenge of providing religious reconciliation training. Prison Fellowship Rwanda and Youth With A Mission Rwanda are two local organizations that have been active in Kigali since 1994 and will form the basis of this case study. Bryant Myers' (1999, 2011) Transformational Development framework will be explored and considered as a possible theoretical framework from which to investigate Christian study populations.

List of Abbreviations Used

APRECOM – AIDS PREvention Community Outreach Ministry

FBO – Faith-based organization

KBS – Kigali Bus Service

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

NURC – National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

PFI – Prison Fellowship International

PFR – Prison Fellowship Rwanda

RPF – Rwandan Patriotic Front

RTLTM – Radio Télévision des Milles Collines

SCYM - Street Children and Youth Ministry

SORJ – School of Reconciliation and Justice

TD – Transformational Development

YWAM – Youth With A Mission

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“Imana yirirwa ahandi igataha i Rwanda”

“God travels around the world during the day but returns to Rwanda at night”

Traditional Rwandan Proverb

Chapter One - Introduction

“So many men had betrayed Claire, she vowed never to trust one again. It started in her childhood. Her family, ethnic Tutsis from Rwanda, fled the violence and discrimination of their troubled African homeland, moving to Burundi when Claire was a small child. But their dream of safety and happiness was short lived. Not long after the family settled into their new home, Claire’s father abandoned his wife and children and ran away with another woman. A lonely teenager, Claire longed for love, especially from a man. Instead, she faced more heartbreak and abuse. A school teacher raped her but was never punished for his crime. Claire turned to her boyfriend for comfort, but when she was 17 she discovered she was pregnant and he too left her. Several years after her son was born, Claire left her child with her mother and sister and returned to Rwanda to find work and support for her family, there she lived with an Uncle. Rwanda was a dangerous place in the early 1990s. Decades of conflict had built suspicion and hatred between the major ethnic groups, violence simmered all of the time. Not long after Claire returned to her home country, a wave of anti-Tutsi riots broke out in the area where she was living. In the ensuing chaos, someone turned the young Tutsi woman over to the vicious Hutu army. The army did not kill Claire; instead, officials accused her of being a spy for Burundi, which was often a base for Tutsi rebellions and guerilla attacks. They threw Claire in jail, beating and torturing her almost every day. She was not allowed to contact her family; no one knew where Claire was, or even whether she had lived through the riots. Frightened and alone, Claire cried out to God from her dark prison cell. She was not a Christian, but she realized if there was a God, he was the only one who knew where she was. To her surprise, she heard a voice answer, ‘I love you. You will survive prison, and you will serve Me.’ Claire knew that the voice was God’s, but she was not sure if she could trust him. The voice was a male one and she had suffered so

much already from males in her life. Would a God who spoke with a voice of a man really help her? After two months in prison, Claire was finally released only to face an even greater danger. In 1994, Rwanda's simmering volcano of ethnic tension erupted. Waves of extremist Hutu mobs, supported by members of the military and government, poured into the streets, intent on destroying the Tutsi people. In just 100 days, machete and rifle-wielding extremist Hutus butchered as many as one million Tutsis, and moderate Hutus, often executing them in their homes or on the street. Every Rwandan was required to carry an identification card listing his or her ethnicity; that spring and summer, a card naming someone a Tutsi was a virtual death warrant. Neighbours killed neighbours. People fled to churches, only to have frightened pastors turn them over to the killers. Trapped in the middle of one of the worst humanitarian crises of the twentieth century, Claire lived in fear, but God miraculously kept his promise to protect her. When the genocide finally ended, Claire was amazed to be alive. She knew that the voice she had heard in prison was that of the true God, and unlike the human males in her life, he had kept his promise to protect and care for her. Claire became a Christian and discovered the unconditional love she had been longing for all her life. God immediately began to speak to Claire's heart as she watched peace return to her country and the people begin to rebuild their lives, Claire felt God was telling her to let go of her wounds. In order to heal, Claire needed to forgive her enemies: first her father, then the teacher, and then the men who came so close to killing her... God continued to bring her messages about forgiveness, and Claire finally found peace. Her desire for revenge disappeared, and for the first time in her life she felt freed from her own emotions. After witnessing the power of forgiveness in her life and others, Claire dedicated her life to serving God. She began to work for Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in Rwanda, showing others the power of Christ's love and his ability to transform individuals. She discovered her calling in the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 1: 3-4; 'Praise be to the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.’ [Claire] thanks God that the cycle of anger and revenge has been broken in her life, and that the reconciliation she experienced is being used by God to help others”¹

¹ I had the privilege of spending time with Claire talking about her journey toward reconciliation. She lent me a well-worn book within which the story of her life is recorded. I have graciously been given permission to share a part of Claire’s story from the pages of this book – St. James, R., and M. E. DeMuth. *Sister Freaks: Stories of Women Who Gave Up Everything For God*. New York: Warner Faith, 2005.

Claire's story is not unique. It is but one of the individual realities for the seven million Rwandans held captive by the claws of chaos and violence during the 1990s. The reality of Rwanda in the spring of 1994 is still hard to imagine – approximately 800,000 dead in a period of one hundred days.² The nation was ravaged by a brutally personal war: neighbour against neighbour, husband against wife, pastor against parishioner. A nation destroyed, a country divided – Rwanda was left in chaos. But despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles, Rwanda has risen from her tomb. Choosing never to forget, hope is the new foundation upon which the country is being built.

For Claire, and many others, this hope rises from their Christian faith. As Claire faced one of her darkest hours, she heard a voice and knew that although her physical surroundings suggested otherwise, she was not alone in that prison. Her belief in God has been the source of her hope and her strength to move forward. Although Claire would be quick to admit that her spiritual journey has been an often painful process, the moment she began her Christian walk marked a new beginning full of promise.

Today, eighteen years after the genocide, despite a growing economy and increased development, the scars and evidence of violence remain pervasive. Genocide memorials line the countryside with skulls piled high staring through long decayed eyes, beggars line the street with dismembered bodies reaching out for someone to turn in their direction, and stories from the lips of survivors continue to reveal the true depth of pain and suffering that they have been assigned to bear. All of these realities testify to the savagery of Rwanda's recent history. Dramatic efforts have been launched to implement reconciliation on a national level. The slogan, 'We are all Rwandan,' posted on public signs and pasted on car windows, aims to unite the country as one national group. However, despite considerable efforts, the country remains in a state of peaceful

² That means that in a country less than half the size of the province of Nova Scotia, over 300 people were killed every hour of the day for 100 days straight.

cohabitation rather than the freedom reconciliation can bring. Restoration can come through reconciliation and it is vital for Rwanda to continue its campaign toward this goal.

Realizing the significance of reconciliation and the resurgence of religion, many faith-based organizations (FBOs), which have had an active presence in Rwanda for many generations, have turned their attention to the process of restoring relationships. *Youth With A Mission Rwanda* (YWAM Rwanda) and *Prison Fellowship Rwanda* (PFR) are two local Christian FBOs working toward a reconciled Rwanda. The genocide severed relationships, now these FBOs seek to restore these relationships through a biblically-based spiritual journey of forgiveness. The contribution of these FBOs deserves examination and this study delves into their reconciliatory efforts as a response to the question: 'What is the role of Christian FBOs in Rwanda's post-genocide reconciliation process?'

Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. ***The first objective is to ask whether there is a need for a theoretical framework that integrates material and spiritual worlds.*** The Transformational Development (TD) framework developed by Bryant Myers (1999, 2011) is a framework that approaches its research subjects from within a Christian paradigm. Its practices and principles are biblically based and it seeks to provide a framework that integrates the spiritual within the core of its principles. The fact that this framework has to be found outside the academic sphere (and the reality that no similar frameworks can be found within academic settings) raises serious questions surrounding the absence of frameworks that seek to examine religion. The relationship between religion and developmental discourse has historically been ambiguous. However, the dawn of the twenty-first century has ushered in a new academic spirit of

inquiry towards all things 'religious' (Jones & Petersen, 2011). Following in this new 'spirit,' this thesis will explore the TD framework and ask whether it is an important and necessary theoretical tool when approaching and researching development within a religious context.

Through the analysis of first-hand data gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, ***the second objective of this thesis is to build upon the previous objective by exploring the role of religion in quotidian activities and reconciliatory initiatives for a specific population in the Global South.*** If it can be determined that certain populations live as though the material and spiritual worlds are one then the TD framework could gain from increased legitimacy. While religion has a complicated and sometimes dark history in Rwanda there is an active presence of FBOs within the small central African nation. Some of these organizations employ staff members who are religious and work with populations of faith in an attempt to bring about reconciliation in a post-genocide society. YWAM Rwanda and PFR are two such FBOs. To fully understand the reconciliatory work being conducted it is important to utilize an appropriate framework that embodies the study population. The potential of the TD framework needs to be examined.

The key questions driving this investigation will be:

- Why should those interested in development pay attention to religion?
- Is it important to consider 'religious' theoretical frameworks?
- What is the current religious context in Rwanda?
- Can FBOs provide an effective model for promoting reconciliation?
- Is forgiveness an appropriate avenue toward achieving reconciliation?

The exploration of these questions is important because there is still a significant gap in the literature surrounding this topic. Carter & Smith (2004) argue that religion has the potential to make a real and significant contribution to the peace process and it is

integral that this potential be explored and examined (Clarke, 2008). Even though the literature surrounding restorative justice is growing there has been a lack of academic investigation into the success or failures of local justice mechanisms (Waldorf, 2006). Existing studies, approach local justice from a macro-level stance that is ineffective when examining micro-level organizations (Waldorf, 2006). Rwanda could be an exemplar for studying local mechanisms of restorative justice and as Clarke (2008) argues, “religious actors are ... playing an increasingly important role in resolving international conflicts and in promoting truth and reconciliation” (p. 345). Therefore, “any research that deepens our understanding of how to facilitate and promote reconciliation in these societies is highly valuable” (Clarke, 2008, p. 345).

Organization of the Thesis

The remainder of Chapter One will consist of an overview of the complicated relationship between religion and development. Possible reasons why religion has been ignored within development discourse, including the advantages and disadvantages of religion in development, will be discussed. Although in the past decade there has been a growing recognition of the role of religion in development, the idea has yet to gain appropriate academic attention. This chapter will end by identifying the existing gaps in the literature and state that the goal of this thesis is to add to the growing body of literature attempting to remedy this gap.

Chapter Two will explore Bryant Myers’ (1999, 2011) Transformational Development framework. Its evolution and current uses will be described. The chapter will then present a brief discussion of the chosen qualitative methodology for this investigation, its appropriateness, and the specific ethnographic data collection methods used. Concluding this chapter, a quick examination of the limitations of this study will be addressed.

Chapter Three provides a historical background of Rwanda leading up to the genocide and continuing to the immediate aftermath of the violence. Starting in the pre-colonial era, this chapter does not presume to be a complete historical account but merely presents a summarized account. The final section of this chapter will address the history of the Christian church in Rwanda and its role during the genocide. This section will also briefly explore the local belief that the 1994 genocidal violence was, at least partially, due to the influence of dark spiritual forces.

Chapter Four investigates the different strategies Rwanda has employed since the genocide to achieve both justice and reconciliation. With a focus on restorative justice, efforts launched at international, national, and local levels will be explored. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the *Gacaca* courts and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission will each be discussed in turn. This chapter will end by taking the discussion down to a local, grass-roots level. Both non-governmental and faith-based organizations (FBOs) have played a large role in Rwanda and the final section will briefly explore FBOs.

Chapter Five delves into the reconciliatory work being administered by two specific FBOs currently working within Rwanda. Prison Fellowship Rwanda and Youth With A Mission Rwanda have each been operating in Rwanda since the end of the 1994 genocide. Their biblically based models for achieving reconciliation will be explored and the findings of the case study will be shared.

Chapter Six begins by considering the applicability of the Transformational Development framework when working with faith-based organizations, making some suggestions about future possibilities for the TD framework. It concludes with some final thoughts on the future of Rwanda.

The Complicated Relationship Between Religion and Development

Throughout the history of development discourse, the discipline has largely neglected the role of religion (Buijs, 2004; Clarke, 2006, 2008; Clarke & Jennings, 2008; Deneulin & Bano, 2009; Haynes, 2007; Marshall, 2001; Myers, 1999; Ver Beek, 2000). The religious dimension has long been disregarded as both a motivation for development work as well as an inspiration for the people development work seeks to help (Buijs, 2004). As a result, religion has been relegated to the academic margins. Not only has the subject of religion reluctantly found itself outside of scholastic spheres, in some cases it has been accused by critics as being the ‘antithesis of development’ (Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p. 4). With religion lying on the periphery, the dominant normative frameworks for development studies have largely been material-based, as opposed to spiritual-based (Myers, 1999) as evidenced in the overriding emphasis on economic growth. However, the influence of religion in the global South according to Jenkins (2008) is growing. To put this increase in context, between 1900 and 2000, the Christian population in Africa expanded from 10 million to over 360 million (Jenkins, 2008). Attention should be given to this largely unrepresented area of people’s lives. This section will explore the complicated relationship between religion and development by first delving into possible reasons why, historically, religion has been ignored within development discourse. A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of religion to development will also be presented. In the past decade there has been a growing recognition of the role of religion within development studies (Jones & Petersen, 2011) and the second half of this section will consider the argument that development work can be seen as inherently ‘moral’ with religious foundations. Despite a growing acceptance of religion within development discourse, there are still gaps within the literature and as Jenkins (2008) argues, the “growing significance of Christianity in global South nations demands to be understood by anyone interested in the future development of those

regions” (p. 17). The attempt to help fill this gap is one of the reasons for this thesis and has ultimately provided a preliminary frame for this research project.

Asking Why? – Religion dismissed to the margins

Through an examination of the literature, it is evident that religion has, until recently, largely been ignored within development studies (Buijs, 2004; Clarke, 2006, 2008; Clarke & Jennings, 2008; Deneulin & Bano, 2009; Haynes, 2007; Marshall, 2001; Myers, 1999; Ver Beek, 2000). Therefore, it is important to ask why there has been such a significant gap. Religion has suffered from a negative reputation throughout recent history. Some of the unfavourable accusations may be justified (as will be discussed below), however, some of the statements may be critiqued. As stated in the previous section, religion has been accused of being the ‘antithesis of development’ (Clark & Jennings, 2008, p. 4). Beyond the shock value of this statement, such an opinion suggests that religion is a negative, counter-developmental force.

Religion is often viewed as being traditional and conservative. The view that religion is unchanging is an assumption arising from the notion that religious people uphold unchanging laws written in ancient sacred texts. Therefore, the belief is that the opinions and actions of devout followers will never change despite a dramatically changing world. Unfortunately, this has been an accurate claim throughout history. As Smith (1991) explains: “the stereotypic image of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America long was of a tradition-bound, inflexible, conservative, elite-allied institution. Although this image is, to a certain degree, a caricature, it does have some basis in fact, and, historically, has been more often true than false” (p. 3). Bokenkotter (1977) discusses the European Catholic Church during the 18th century and notes that

during the next four centuries, the Church ... set itself with grim determination against most of the trends of modern secular culture. Shaken by crisis after crisis – the most notable one being the French Revolution, which began in 1789 – it

managed to keep its ranks unbroken and its faith unchanged ... its attitude to the modern world outside the Church remained doggedly negative and condemnatory. (p. 2)

Clearly, there are instances where religion has been a counter-developmental force but religious movements and organizations have also spearheaded many successful initiatives. Examples of this include the end of the slave trade (Stark, 2003) and the work toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Clarke & Jennings, 2008; Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Bennell, Harding, and Rogers-Wright (2004) state that “currently, about 75% of primary schools are owned and managed by FBOs in Sierra Leone” (p. 81). Jim Wallis (2006) argues that “‘only a new moral, spiritual and even religious sensibility’ can underpin ‘the struggle to eliminate the world’s worst poverty’ (p. 270-271). ‘It is social movements which change history, and the best movements are the ones with spiritual foundations’” (p. xvi). The claim of religious inflexibility does not hold as a generalized statement; such a label cannot be placed on something as dynamic and diverse as religion. Although sacred texts do not change, interpretations and applications do change across time. Religion and the religious are not necessarily static. Religion can be dynamic. Seen through religious revivals (Thomas, 2010) and the growing intensity of religious activism (Donnelly, 2008), religion is adapting and responding to its ever-changing reality.

Religion has also been labeled as being intimately connected to conflict and violence. Juergensmeyer (2003) goes as far as arguing “religion seems to be connected with violence virtually everywhere” (p. xi). Debatably, religion has been used more often than any other banner to instigate and legitimate violence (Cavey, 2007; Juergensmeyer, 2003; Thomas, 2000). As Deneulin and Bano (2009) state, “the tensions between different worldviews are ... very real” (p. 24) and religion plays a large part in creating these worldviews. It could be argued that by incorporating religion into the development paradigm, conflict could grow and violence could eventually erupt.

Religion has possibly been sidelined because of this reasoning and because the fear of religious conflict is real. Ver Beek (2000) argues that this reality is easily revealed in “the continuing conflicts in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, and the Balkans [which] are daily reminders of how the manipulation of spiritual and religious themes and symbols can kindle distrust and hatred” (p. 40). Within the global resurgence of religion (Thomas, 2010), there are renewed attempts to fuse religion with politics. In the past, this claim for authority and power has produced largely negative results and these negative aspects of the religious renewal are causing conflicts over differences in culture, ethnicity, and religion (Clarke & Jennings, 2008). However, while religion is often blamed, it is important to remember that it is often men and women pushing their own interpretations that result in extreme positions and behaviours. Followers of the same religion can produce different behavioural manifestations; some may uphold pacifism while others will cry ‘holy war’. While religiously motivated conflict is possible, it is not necessarily probable. Fear of violence should not be an excuse to relegate religion to the sidelines.

Another reason why religion has been left out of development discourse is based on the argument that religion is primarily concerned with individual conduct as opposed to societal behaviours (Clarke, 2008). Because religion is assumed to be a private matter, secularist theorists have argued that through the period of modernity, religion would eventually become socially irrelevant (Buijs, 2004; Clarke & Jennings, 2008; Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Since the Enlightenment, religion has largely been viewed as incompatible with reason and rationality and because of this inconsistency it is argued that religion will slowly disappear as society develops (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Religion has been relegated to a level of insignificance (Clarke & Jennings, 2008). However, having focused on a Eurocentric view of the world, this secularist view failed to consider the Global South (Jenkins, 2006). By taking a global perspective, Clarke and Jennings (2008) and Jenkins (2006) argue that the number of religious followers has dramatically

increased in the latter half of the twentieth century making religion far from insignificant in the modern era. As opposed to Enlightenment era thinking:

religion and faith has not given away to secularism but maintained, if not extended, its reach into society at large... The presence of a powerful social, political, economic and cultural faith-based discourse at local, national and international levels is a reality that cannot be ignored or dismissed as the dying gasp of a pre-modern relic. (Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p. 263)

The claim of incompatibility has been used to keep religion on the developmental margins but today the influence of religion is increasing on a global level. Religion needs to be brought into development discussion and its significance explored.

A final reason why religion has been ignored within development discourse is because of a lack of existing theoretical religious models or frameworks. Without a pre-established precedent from which to work, it becomes difficult for academics to conduct research. This lack of frameworks suggests three attitudes:

1. That religion and issues of spirituality are not worth exploring.
2. That academics will be risking their professional reputation by engaging in a topic long ignored (Ver Beek, 2000).
3. That most development researchers do not want to engage in a topic that they do not fully understand.

There is an incorrect belief that the only choice when researching religion is to either become “a wholesale missionary, trying to convert other people to a development gospel or to pass over the religious dimension in total silence” (Buijs, 2004, p. 106). It is true that researchers must be prepared to divulge and defend their intentions and motivations when researching religion, but this expectation exists when researching any topic. To simply ignore an aspect of influence in people’s lives because of any of the reasons stated above seems intellectually unacceptable. However, the new millennium has brought with it a growing interest surrounding the relationship between religion and development.

A decade of growing recognition

As expressed above, there are undeniable risks involved in researching the issues of spirituality within development. It is important to also recognize that spirituality and religion are difficult terms to define. They are both abstract concepts, however Ver Beek (2000) provides a foundation from which to work from:

I will define spirituality as a relationship with the supernatural or spiritual realm that provides meaning and a basis for personal and communal reflection, decisions, and action. While religion is generally considered an institutionalized set of beliefs and practices regarding the spiritual realm, spirituality describes the personal and relational side of those beliefs, which shape daily life. So while one could be spiritual without being religious or vice versa, in practice the two are commonly intertwined as people experience and describe their spirituality through a religious perspective. (p. 32)

Religion, being a loaded concept, can spur not just service and altruism but also violence and judgment. Despite the risks, religion is still important and should not be ignored. Ver Beek (2000) argues: “just as social scientists and practitioners have recognized that gender, class, and ethnicity, while potentially conflictual, are integral components of people’s identity and must be taken fully into account in development efforts, so spirituality and religion, because they are so central in the lives of people living in poverty, must also be addressed” (p. 32). This realization has led to a growing recognition of the role of religion within development. Since the dawn of the new millennium, the sacred and the secular have been on a journey to discover each other and this odyssey should not be downplayed. Both sides will have to reconcile some of their past grievances and, according to Clarke & Jennings (2008), “this journey counts among the most significant innovations in development discourse and policy over the last decade” (p. 4). In an attempt to overcome past disregard for religion, discussions concerning the very foundations of development as being religious in nature have surfaced.

Development as 'moral'

While the role of religion within development has historically been marginalized, there is growing recognition of its important role in the practice of development work. While this recognition is a recent occurrence, it has been argued that the relationship between religion and development runs deep. Scholars have even presented the argument that religion forms the foundation upon which development was first constructed (Buijs, 2004; Clarke & Jennings, 2008; Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Deneulin and Bano (2009) go as far to argue "that there is no separation between religion and development" (p. 4). Behind this reasoning is the fact that both religion and development are "normative ideals and moral discourses concerned with the welfare of humankind" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p. 1). This common morality creates a unique relationship between two spheres assumed to be previously estranged.

Caritas is defined as the Christian love for all humankind (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2009), and was originally used to describe the inspiration behind the alleviation of human suffering (Buijs, 2004). It can be argued that religious, in particular Christian, followers do 'development' because that is what they are called to do on a daily basis. In Matthew 25, Jesus Christ says to His followers:

'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (35-40)

The participation of religious institutions within development is to be expected being derived from their core theological beliefs (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Buijs (2004) argues that development is a fusion of *caritas* with secularist theories concerning the idea of development.

While there are certainly examples portraying religion as an obstacle to development and a cause of violence, Deneulin and Bano (2009) argue that when religious fundamentalism and religious ignorance are eliminated, “the development work of religious traditions is part of what being a good Christian or a good Muslim is all about, together with prayer and worship” (p. 5). Religious impulse cannot be isolated from development; the spiritual and secular worlds are deeply intertwined (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). While Buijs’ (2004) argument that development practice is undeniably a missionary practice in its foundation may be difficult, if not impossible to defend, it is easier to identify connections that bind religion and development together.

While the notion that development has distinct religious foundations has yet to permeate developmental discourse, there is a new openness concerning the role of religion within development practice (Buijs, 2004). This growing openness will perhaps help to restore the divide between development practice and the work of religious institutions.

Increased recognition, but...

Empirically, religion, and Christianity in particular, has been shown to be on the rise in the Global South (Jenkins, 2006; Noll, 2009; Thomas, 2010) with certain countries and cities experiencing a religious resurgence. Scott Thomas (2010) argues that “[religion] is growing in countries with a wide variety of religious traditions and levels of economic development, suggesting that neither poverty nor social exclusion is solely responsible” (p. 93). The reality of this religious resurgence is that religion is no longer confined within the private sphere but is increasingly surfacing in the public surface (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). In order for development to succeed it must take into consideration the reality that faith is a tangible part of many people’s lives. For those embracing a theological lifestyle, “spirituality is integral to their understanding of the

world and their place in it, and so is central to the decisions they make about their own and their communities' development" (Ver Beek, 2000, p. 31). Given that spirituality plays such an important role in the daily lives of so many people, development must beware of this. To properly engage with the religious dimension, development needs to consider religion in all spheres: economics, health, politics, etc. (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Conventional development practices must be transformed to accommodate the religious.

Lack of appropriate religious frameworks is not a justifiable excuse to continue to ignore the power and influence of spirituality. Existing frameworks must be brought out of the shadows so they can be tested, improved, or redesigned. New frameworks will also need to be created. Deneulin and Bano (2009) present a powerful argument which appropriately summarizes the themes of this section on religion and development: "even if development workers do not see religion as relevant to their own lives, they still need to reckon with it, as it often lies at the foundations of the lives of those their interventions have targeted" (p. 26). Whether religion is a part of a personal conviction, important to research subjects, or merely a force within society, it must be taken seriously. This thesis intends to build upon the expanding literature and offer an important case study that identifies the fusion of religion and development. There are still gaps in the literature to be filled; hopefully this work will be a bridge to previously isolated areas of discussion.

Chapter Two: Merging the Material and Spiritual Worlds – The Transformational Development Framework

*Religious experience is an absolute. It is indisputable.
You can only say that you have never had such an experience, and your opponent will say:
'Sorry, I have.'
And there your discussion will end.
(Carl Jung)*

One of the reasons, previously mentioned, why religion has been left to the sidelines of development discourse is a lack of appropriate theoretical models and frameworks.³ This section will introduce and discuss the theoretical framework chosen for this study. Unlike others that could have guided this research, this framework takes into account the lifestyles adopted by the research participants through the merging of the material and spiritual worlds. It is important to take into consideration new frameworks that may have a better appreciation for and relevance to the study population. The Transformational Development framework was developed by Bryant Myers who, at the time of its formulation, was working as Vice President with World Vision International. This framework needs to be closely examined and tested. Comments surrounding possible modification or redesign will be left until the concluding chapter.

Transformation

'Transformation' is a highly loaded term (Getu, 2002). Like many popular terms within development discourse, a definition is often difficult to determine. A dictionary

³ It is important to acknowledge existing religious frameworks that have each played an important role in the history of development studies, such as, liberation theology and Catholic social teaching are useful academic tools when studying certain religious populations. More recently, the terms transformational development and integral mission have been used somewhat interchangeably. However, for the context of this study it was determined that Myers' (1999, 2011) Transformational Development framework would provide an appropriate framework to explore.

definition provides a primitive starting point: “transformation: a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance” (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2009). The emphasis of this linguistic definition is placed on ‘change.’ Within development studies the emphasis on ‘change’ is pushed further, adding a moral element, stressing ‘*good* change’ (Chambers, 2005). However, within this specific context the definition is pushed even further to include a biblical vision of transformation.

In the 1970s and 1980s the term ‘transformation’ began to surface in terms of describing Christian development work (Sugden, 2003). In the mid 1970s theological and biblical studies were conducted, attempting to discover the relationship between Christianity and acts of social justice (Sugden, 2003). ‘Transformation’ was inculcated in the Wheaton Statement of 1983 when the term was officially applied to Christian involvement in development as described in “Transformation – The Church in Response to Human Need” (Sugden, 2003). Within this biblical context, transformation “is the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God’s purposes to one in which people are able to enjoy fullness of life in harmony with God” (Sugden, 2003, p. 71). This ‘change’ can only occur by being in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ,

whose power changes the lives of men and women by releasing them from the guilt, power and consequences of sin, enabling them to respond with love toward God and toward others (Romans 5:5), and making them new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). (Sugden, 2003, p. 71)

Transformation within a biblical context is holistic (whole-person) development (Getu, 2002). Economic, social, emotional, political, spiritual and behavioural spheres all affect the lives of humans (Getu, 2002; Samuel, 1999). Biblical holism⁴ recognizes this compositional relationship and biblically based development takes into account the entirety of forces impacting human life and attempts to bring fulfillment within all spheres

⁴ Within this context, Myers refers to holism as the appropriate way of approaching development work. People must be viewed in terms of the whole person. Economic, social, emotional, political, spiritual and behavioural forces all impact a person’s life so they must ALL be taken into account when designing development programs.

as it is dictated by God's edicts, as opposed to limiting the focus on one or two spheres (Getu, 2002). As Samuel (1999) explains: "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" (p. 227-228). Biblical transformation slowly began to enter the development world; however, it would remain in isolation from mainstream development. Secular and spiritual development work were, to borrow a popular metaphor used by Katherine Marshall (2001), like "ships passing in the night" (p. 368). While they were travelling in the same direction, toward the same offshore destination, secular and spiritual development would travel along parallel courses without ever connecting to complete their journey together. Many religious development groups and organizations chose to construct their own models and frameworks.

The Transformational Development Framework

Bryant Myers, currently a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, has over 30 years of experience working with World Vision International ("Fuller Theological Seminary", 2008). He is a self-proclaimed activist, fighting to promote Christian relief and development globally (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008). Myers has an extensive background, with numerous published books and articles to his credit. *Walking With The Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (1999) is a comprehensive text detailing his Transformational Development (TD) Framework. As Hiebert (1996) describes in the foreword of the text: "[Myers] develops a solid, scripturally based framework, or theoretical structure, that challenges the spiritual/natural dualism which pervades our Western worldview and that offers a consistent biblical worldview in its place" (As quoted in *Walking With the Poor*, Myers, 1999, p. xv). The original text was published in 1999 but in 2011 was updated,

expanded, and republished under the same title. Building upon his original work, the updated text is double the length with newer references and data being used to support his framework. *Walking With The Poor* (1999, 2011) is the basis upon which the TD framework was established and will, therefore, be the foundation of the theoretical framework used within this research project.

Myers argues that one of the main objectives of his text and resulting TD framework is to overcome the ‘modern blind spot’ that is prevalent within development studies. The persistent “belief in the West that the spiritual and physical domains of life are separate and unrelated” (Myers, 1999, p. 4) is a blind spot that creates an impenetrable wall between the act of loving God (the spiritual world) and the act of loving your neighbour (the material world). Myers (1999) argues that everyone believes in something and these beliefs shape our actions and reactions. This ‘ideological center’ creates the guiding principles driving our understanding of what is ‘good change’ and what development is necessary. To understand the initiatives driving this ‘good change’ within a Christian context, Myers created the TD framework. It is this belief that spiritual and material worlds should be treated as one that separates Myers’ framework from other development models. This idea will be repeatedly reinforced throughout this chapter as a key distinguishing feature.

While building on the term ‘development,’ Myers purposefully avoids using ‘development’ alone and combines the term ‘transformational’ with ‘development’ to form an enhanced concept. Myers (1999) avoids solely using the term development for two reasons:

First, the term *development* is heavily loaded with past meaning, not all of which is positive. When most people think of development, they think of material change or social change in the material world. Second, *development* is a term that many understand as a synonym for Westernization or modernization. Too often this understanding of development is associated with having more things. (p. 3 emphasis included in text)

Myers is taking these two pre-conceived associations with the word 'development' and by adding 'transformation' he is constructing a new meaning. Transformational development reflects the desire for positive holistic change that goes beyond material aid (Myers, 1999).

Merging two different spheres into his TD framework, Myers (1999, 2011) takes principles and practices from both secular international development and Christian communities working in international development and combines both of these within the boundaries of a biblical framework. Each of these two spheres will be discussed in turn.

The Principles of Transformational Development

The principles that emerge from the fusion of secular and spiritual development work are: 1. Respecting the community's story; 2. From participation to empowerment; and 3. Building community (Myers, 1999).^{5,6} Myers' first principle refers to the argument that the researcher must acknowledge who the story of transformation belongs to; within the TD paradigm the story belongs to the people themselves. Respect must be paid to both the history of the community and the stories of individuals living in those localities in which development work is being done. Myers (1999) argues "engaged, respectful

⁵ In Myers' (1999) original text there was a fourth principle: Learning our way toward transformation. This principle reveals a common misperception within a lot of development work – that development is a linear process. The realization that social systems are complex makes planning more difficult. However, the trend in development work today has moved toward learning and adapting. To counter difficulties, the TD framework recommends that TD workers eliminate 'management-by-objectives' and replace that with a vision-and-values approach (Myers, 1999, p. 146). This form of approach identifies a vision of a better future and the Godly values under which the work will be conducted. With a "marker on the horizon" (Myers, 1999, p. 146) evaluations must become more frequent because only by consistent observation can TD learn its way towards transformation. While evaluation has become a popular process within development today, it is TD's focus on Biblical values that sets this principle apart from others.

⁶ Some of these principles can easily be seen in secular development frameworks. As such, Myers cannot claim uniqueness. However, the attributes intertwined within these principles that do make this framework unique will be highlighted throughout this section.

relationships [between development workers and community members] are so important to transformational development” (p. 138). Today, many theoretical frameworks and development models place considerable attention on the stories of local communities. What makes TD stand out is that it listens to the stories of both the seen and unseen worlds. Development work tends to be most interested in operating within the natural order – the material world – but as Myers (1999) points out “whether we agree or not, these domains of the unseen spiritual world are where the community will tend to locate the cause of its problems and the hope for their solutions” (p. 141). For TD, prayer and spiritual discernment is a necessity for both development workers and local community workers as individuals but they must also work as a group “and listen in the midst of all the information [they] have gathered and be open to God leading [them] to the information and conclusions that God deems most important” (Myers, 2011, p. 247). This principle of respecting that the development process lies within the people themselves also means that the development worker must respect indigenous knowledge and the fact that these people know how to survive. The development projects being considered may improve life in some ways but the fact remains that these people groups have survived for many generations before ‘development’ arrived.

‘From participation to empowerment’ is the second principle of the TD framework. It has already been mentioned that the development story should belong to individuals and communities as opposed to development workers. Stemming from this idea, it makes sense that local participation should play an essential part of transformation. Participatory development strategies are familiar concepts in today’s development. With TD active participation by locals is one way to help restore identity and dignity through a process of empowerment (Myers, 2011). However, the resources must be accessible within the community. As Myers (1999) explains, one of the difficulties of this principle is that development workers must humble themselves and

admit that they do not always know the best solution or strategy when working within particular communities. Eade (2003) agrees and argues that “techniques and methods alone do not add up to a coherent approach, beliefs about development are worth little without the skills to put them into practice, and the wisdom and humility required to learn from experience” (p. *xii*). Seeking out local participation can be a “safeguard against our doing unwitting damage” (Myers, 1999, p. 147). Participation is a key to success for TD; however, the quality of participation matters.

Using the work of Norman Uphoff as a foundation, Myers (1999) explains that the quality of participation must be closely examined and monitored. Participation can be monitored by asking three of Uphoff’s (1979) questions: “Who is participating? What kind of participation? How is the participation occurring?” (As quoted in *Walking With The Poor*, Myers, 1999, p. 148). It is important that participation includes local people from different levels of society and social groups. If participation is limited to government officials or residents of a higher social group then the results will be flawed; the same could be said about only having representatives from grassroots community groups. Stratified participation is integral to participation. Participation also needs to be used during all the phases of TD not just the beginning steps. The goal of participation is empowerment. This goal is achieved through the method of sharing the development process with local residents. As Myers (1999) describes: “Communities discover that it is indeed *their* development process that is underway and that they are capable of exercising choice and becoming capable of managing their own development” (p. 148). This process of empowerment through participation is a process of changing people. Myers (1999) argues that empowerment of local populations is the most critical aspect of transformation. This process is giving ordinary citizens the tools needed to analyze circumstances and react appropriately. Myers (1999) argues:

If this kind of change – the ability to understand why things are as they are and the conviction that we can exert some level of influence over what happens to us – is one of the keys to social change in the West, then empowering participation must be at the core of transformational development among the poor. Only changed people can change history. (p. 149)

If development does not aim to produce a changed people then the purpose of creating long-term improvement is defeated.

The third principle of TD is to build community. Koyama (1974) introduced the term ‘neighborology’ to Christian mission work. This term refers to the fact “that people need good neighbours much more than they need good theology or good development theory” (Myers, 1999, p. 150). Above ideas, programs, or objectives, TD is about people. Through the process of participation (i.e. sharing our own stories and ideas) people can become neighbours. Community forms when caring and sharing with your neighbour takes place. This process does not always happen quickly. The development worker must learn to exercise patience. In fact Erickson (1996) summarizes this idea quite effectively: “taking our neighbour’s questions into account is so time consuming that it is better to forget about time... We must learn to speak our neighbour’s language... We must come to know what makes our neighbour laugh and cry” (As quoted in *Walking With the Poor*, p. 154). The three main principles of TD are all linked: TD strives to create healthy community by encouraging participation amongst empowered individuals guided by compassionate development workers who are patient and actively involved.

The Practices of Transformational Development

Myers (1999, 2011) divides the practices of the TD framework into two sections: the first is the process of designing development programs, and the second is the monitoring and evaluation process of these programs. Myers (2011) argues that “the *process* by which a program is designed is often more important than creating the *development plan* itself” (p. 239, emphasis included in text). The needs of the local

people, as determined by the locals themselves, are one of the primary focuses of TD (Grams, 2001). Enabling communities to vocalize their own concerns and stories is a mandatory step before the communities themselves, along with development workers, can decide which development strategy to employ (Myers, 2011). Another primary design focus for TD is listening to the authority of God. As Myers (2011) states:

a truly Christian approach to designing a transformational development program also needs to be open and attentive to what God has to say... The process by which we work with the community is not just a problem-solving or appreciative exercise. It must be a spiritual exercise, an exercise in discernment. (p. 247-248)

Consistently, development organizations design programs using prescribed problem-solving frameworks. While the language may differ between organizations the formula remains relatively consistent – an *assessment* is conducted, a program is *designed* then *implemented*, the program is followed through by a process of *monitoring* and *evaluation* which results in a period of *reflection* and ultimately periodic *redesigns* (Myers, 2011). It is difficult, if not impossible, to argue that these kind of cyclical, logical frameworks are ineffective because in reality they are quite valuable for certain development projects. A program designed at building a school would work extremely well under the cyclical/logical model. However, as Myers (2011) states: “to transform the way a poor community functions as a social system, we need a different way of working” (p. 246). There needs to be a better way to develop programs because, in Myers’ (2011) own words: “social change is neither linear nor logical” (p. 243). The actions and paths of social systems cannot be predicted and therefore results over the long-term are impossible to anticipate. In fact, the only prediction that can accurately be made is that over the long-term the results will most certainly be different than anticipated (Myers, 2011).

With the realization that social systems are complex and difficult to predict, Myers argues that the practices of development have to change. The design process and the

monitoring and evaluating of outcomes, under the TD framework, are adjusted to suit the dynamic nature of social systems. In the planning process the purpose and vision of a better future as defined by the community must remain central while the desire to control and manage is relinquished (Myers, 2011). Planning must be a continual learning process as development workers 'learn their way to the future' (Myers, 1999, p. 146). While elements of TD's design and monitoring phases exist within most other development frameworks, it is integral in transformational development that the design process be open to the spiritual. As Myers (2011) argues, God may have something to say about the process and both development workers and community members must be open to hearing from a Divine source.

The Goals of Development Through Transformational Development

The goals of development work operating under the TD framework can be narrowed down to two objectives: changed people and changed relationships (Myers, 1999, 2011). The culmination of achieving 'changed people' is a group of individuals who are living with a new identity defined by the Kingdom of God (Myers, 1999, 2011). TD is a process that helps people discover this new identity. To nurture and encourage this process, TD introduces the concept of faith. Only through faith can one discover one's true identity. The core of this new identity stems from what it means to be a worker in the Kingdom of God.⁷ In the Christian religion, humans are called to usher in the Kingdom of God on this earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10) by taking part in the responsibilities and roles as prescribed by Jesus Christ. Within a development context some of these

⁷ The Kingdom of God is a Biblical concept that has varying theological interpretations. The Kingdom of God is debatably said to exist in the present but it will also come into its completion when Jesus Christ returns to the earth to fulfill His reign, so "thus at the present time and so far as this earth is concerned, where the King is and where His rule is acknowledged, is first, in the heart of the individual believer" (Strong, 2010, p. *Greek* 52).

prescribed duties are: “Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you” (James 1:27).⁸ The desire and passion to carry out these Kingdom duties forms the foundation upon which the new identity is developed. ‘Changed relationships’ is specifically identified within the TD framework as a goal and result of holistic Christian development. The physical manifestation of ‘changed relationships’ is seen in the establishment of just and peaceful relationships. This idea can be embodied in the concept of ‘shalom.’ Originating in the Hebrew language, Myers (1999) describes shalom by referencing the work of Nicholas Wolterstorff as follows:

shalom is usually translated by the word ‘peace,’ but it means more than the absence of strife. First, shalom is a relational concept, ‘dwelling at peace with God, with self, with fellows, with nature.’ Then, Wolterstorff suggests, we must add the ideas of justice, harmony, and enjoyment to capture the full biblical meaning of the word. Shalom means just relationship (living justly and experiencing justice), harmonious relationships and enjoyable relationships. Shalom means belonging to an authentic and nurturing community in which one can be one’s true self and give one’s self away without becoming poor. Justice, harmony, and enjoyment of God, self, others, and nature; this is the shalom that Jesus brings, the peace that passes all understanding (Wolterstorff 1983, 69-72). (As quoted in *Walking With the Poor*, Myers, 1999, p. 51, emphasis included in text)

It is TD’s focus on love that sets it apart from its developmental counterparts. Love for God and love for one’s neighbour are what leads to both changed people and relationships (Myers, 1999). As Erickson (1996) argues: “Once we come to love our neighbour, we realize that our love is rooted in the pain of God, the pain God feels when our neighbour is not loved” (p. 154, as cited in *Walking With the Poor*). Hence, neither of the primary goals of changed people and changed relationships are materially-based; they are aimed at spiritual transformation.⁹ Through a nurturing of faith, the TD

⁸ New Living Translation Bible translation.

⁹ For the sake of this research project it should be noted that Myers specifically mentions reconciliation as an outcome of ‘changed relationship’.

framework provides what is needed to pursue both spiritual and material transformation (Gorlorwulu & Rahschulte, 2010).

The Role of Transformational Development Workers – Holistic Practitioners

The TD framework lays out specific instructions for development workers. As Myers (1999) argues, transformation is not possible without fully committed development workers – “the effectiveness of transformational development comes down, not to theory, principles, or tools, but to people” (Myers, 2011, p. 219) – and these men and women must be holistic practitioners (Myers, 1999). The holistic practitioner must adopt a specific attitude towards development because the chosen techniques and plans to initiate change can only be properly used when the practitioner approaches his work from the right attitude and mindset (Myers, 2011). Myers lists the following attitudes critical to becoming an effective TD holistic practitioner (this is a condensed list; for a complete and detailed list see Myers, 2011, p. 219-221):

1. *Being a good neighbour*: rooted in God’s command to love God and our neighbour this attitude is one that encourages patience and flexibility: patience while the practitioner develops relationships and flexibility as they realize that becoming ‘neighbours’ often involves a willingness to change who we are (Myers, 2011).
2. *Be humble before the facts*: Humility is difficult especially when the development worker is often stereotyped as the ‘expert’; however TD requires a humble practitioner. Those we are working with frequently know more than we acknowledge and the development worker does not always know as much as they think. Being humble means that both parties should acknowledge their weaknesses but also their strengths and be willing to allow the other to actively participate and in some cases lead (Myers, 2011).
3. *Every moment and every action is potentially transforming*: As holistic practitioners it is important to realize that all of our actions may carry significance that we are unaware of. At all times we must act as representatives of God’s kingdom. As Myers (2011) describes: “every action is a silent offering to God, a potentially transforming moment” (p. 220).
4. *Love the people, not the program*: It is integral that holistic practitioners always remember that they are doing development not for the sake of programs but for the sake of people (Myers, 2011).

5. *Cultivate a repentant spirit*: It is inevitable that as development workers mistake will be made; therefore, it should become second nature to ask for and also grant forgiveness. God has commanded us to forgive so as development workers it is fundamental that repentance and forgiveness be incorporated into daily routines (Myers, 2011).
6. *Whose reality counts?*: As stated above, development workers are often painted as 'experts'. Unfortunately this notion can lead to the belief that our education and experience prioritizes our opinions – our view of reality becomes the indisputable truth. However, as holistic practitioners we must not be swayed by our supposed positions of authority. Constant review of our ideological location is key (Myers, 2011).

The TD framework openly admits its objective of merging material and spiritual worlds within one framework. Holism is of utmost importance and, to insure that this is a reality, Myers (2011) argues that it is necessary to have holistic practitioners. Myers (2011) states that holistic practitioners operating under the TD framework must not only be Christian in title but committed and practicing Christ-centered followers. Through a spiritual calling to Christianity, these development workers will intuitively live according to the attitudes described above. As Myers (2011) explains: Christian holistic practitioners will “understand that God’s rule extends to all of life – our relationship with God, ourselves, our neighbours, and our environment” (p. 222). While Myers (2011) does acknowledge that everyone can contribute to the reality of development, whether they be Christian or not, he maintains that to operate under TD you must be a Christian. This further distinguishes the TD framework from other secular academic frameworks.

The Transformational Development Framework in Practice – World Vision

Myers’ (1999, 2011) text, *Walking With The Poor*, outlines the principles and practices of the TD framework and discusses the biblical theoretical foundations upon which it is founded. However, it has few in-depth practical examples. The point of Myers’ text is not to provide a longitudinal study of how the framework has been used but rather

to describe its foundations, core ideology, and framework. However, to add validity to the framework it is important to examine variations and applications of the model. Because of Myers' previously intimate relationship with World Vision, it was a logical decision for the global Christian relief and development agency to adopt the TD framework for certain development projects. They have crafted their own core documents based on the principles and practices of TD. While they have chosen to narrow the framework to deal uniquely with the wellbeing of children, the principles remain consistent with Myers' original design. World Vision developed a TDNet, which, according to their core document, "is a partnership-wide network of colleagues representing frontline teams, regional and support offices with a unique mix of development practitioners and marketers" (TDNET World Vision, 2003, p. 2). The purpose of TDNet is to provide a team who can give leadership to the process of understanding and improving the practice of transformational development. The mission statement of World Vision's version of TD is:

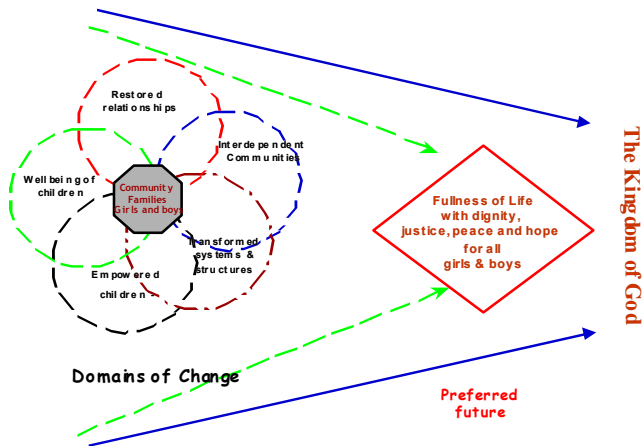
Transformational development that is community-based and sustainable, focused especially on the wellbeing of all girls and boys. As followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, we celebrate God's vision for all people from all cultures and we believe that the preferred future for all boys and girls, families and their communities is 'fullness of life with dignity, justice, peace and hope.' (TDNET World Vision, 2003, p. 3)

Under World Vision's TD framework several domains of change are identified (these are specifically targeted areas where change is desired): well-being of children, and their families and communities; empowered children to be agents of transformation; transformed relationships; interdependent and empowered communities; and transformed systems and structures. Each domain of change is then broken down further into scopes of change where achievable goals are listed. Below is an example of a domain of change and its subsequent scope of change:

Domains of Change (Areas of desired change) (boldface corresponds to titles of the impact section of the TD Policy)	Scope of change
III. Transformed relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restored relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. • Equitable, just, peaceful, productive and inclusive relationships within households and communities that impact spiritual, economic, social, political, and ecclesiastical aspects of life. • Responsible relationship with the environment. • Includes all who participate in the process of Transformational Development (donors, sponsors, churches, organisations, staff and their families, boards, the poor, the non-poor) changing their values, and lifestyles to be consistent with Christ's concern for the poor as well as an enhanced relationship with God.

(Figure 1 – TDNET World Vision, 2003, p. 3)

These domains of change are all interconnected as they strive to improve lives of children, families, and communities. As the domains of change slowly achieve the mentioned scopes of change, communities inch closer to seeing the Kingdom of God established. The following diagram demonstrates this process:



Transformational Development that is community based, and sustainable, focused especially on the well-being of all children

(Figure 2 – TDNET World Vision, 2003, p. 5)

Certain World Vision development projects operate under a highly developed TD framework with indicators, definitions, and measurement processes. At a foundational

level, World Vision closely adheres to Myers' original concept of TD. The following is an excerpt from World Vision's core TDNET document providing definition of terms:

<p>B. Transformational Development</p> <p>Transformational Development is a process through which children, families and communities move toward fullness³ of life with dignity, justice, peace and hope. The scope of Transformational Development includes social, spiritual, economic, political, and environmental aspects of life at the local, national, regional and global levels.</p> <p>The Transformational Development process recognises that God is already involved among the poor and non-poor. Human transformation is a continuous process of profound and holistic change brought about by the work of God. Hence, the process and the impact of Transformational Development must be consistent with the principles and values of the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>The impact of Transformational Development is characterised by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well-being of all girls, boys, families, and communities.• Empowered girls and boys as agents of transformation.• Restored relationships, dignity and identity.• Interdependent and empowered communities.• Transformed institutions, systems and structures. <p>We recognise that the Transformational Development process is not linear, and events such as natural disasters, destructive conflicts and pandemics (HIV/AIDS) would interrupt or set back this process. Therefore, Transformational Development process must reduce risks and enhance the capacities of families and communities to prevent, cope with, mitigate and respond to disasters, conflicts, and pandemics such as HIV/ AIDS⁴. World Vision's approach to Transformational Development is community-based, sustainable, focused on well-being of all children and holistic.</p>
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(Figure 3 – TDNET World Vision, 2003, p. 24)

World Vision has been using the Transformational Development framework for over 10 years. Although its appearance and use has evolved over the years, the core principles and foundations have remained loyal to Myers' (1999, 2011) version of TD. However, there are still several concerns and weaknesses of the TD framework to consider.

Concerns and Critiques – Identifying Weaknesses of the TD Framework

This section addressing concerns and critiques of the TD framework will be divided into two parts. The first part will explore existing critiques of Myers' framework coming from the academic sphere; the second section will then address potential critiques as to why the TD framework was chosen for this specific research project.

The TD framework appears to have gone through limited independent analysis.¹⁰ However, there remain some important critiques that should be noted. By bringing the framework once again into the spotlight through this research project, hopefully more critical evaluation will follow. The existing critiques range widely from comments targeting specific areas within the TD framework to attacking its entirety. Gorlorwulu and Rahschulte (2010) argue that while the embrace of transformational development is a positive advancement in the Christian community, there is a concern when it comes to the practical implementation of TD programs. Different leadership styles would result in significantly different operational practices and because of TD's focus on the process rather than objectives or goals, it is difficult to hold leaders accountable when projects veer from their target results (Gorlorwulu & Rahschulte, 2010).

Touching on the idea of overcoming disagreements within a TD team, Deneulin and Bano (2009) also comment on the role of leaders operating under the TD framework. Their critique addresses the question: How do you overcome an impasse when no one should use their position of authority to resolve the issue (Deneulin & Bano, 2009)? Religious and spiritual ideas are not always homogeneous; often they inspire dramatically different interpretations and actions. Deneulin and Bano (2009) express their concern about the opportunity for open and free dialogue in such complex and naturally hierarchical contexts.

Another critique addresses TD's apparent lack of quantifiable and qualitative evidence. Wilson (2011) argues that TD practitioners surmise that the results of their development projects surpass the results of traditional development initiatives without providing proper evidence. However, by Wilson's (2011) own admission, the evaluation and assessment element of the TD framework is underdeveloped. By its very nature,

¹⁰ Academic and scholarly investigation of the TD framework is severely lacking. Repetitive searches for material on TD often come up empty. Most material had to be found within lesser-known journals.

“the complex and intangible characteristics of the TD paradigm challenge measurement and evaluation efforts” (Wilson, 2011, p. 104). Wilson (2011) states that what evidence is brought forward from TD practitioners is “anecdotal in nature” (p. 105). To hold up in positivist circles, transformation needs to be observed and measured. Evidence must use quantifiable and qualitative language (Wilson, 2011).

Wallace (2002) calls into question the very nature of church-based development work. Transformational development prides itself on its focus on participatory communication between both holistic practitioners and local community members, but as Wallace (2002) argues the concept of ‘participation’ “often falls far short of any true dialogue, where the voice of the poor carries equal weight with that of the resource-bringing change agents or the local elite” (p. 135). Even within local communities there tend to be hierarchies where certain voices are overshadowed or not even allowed to speak.

Another critique that Wallace (2002) presents has to do with financial support. Often TD programs rely on external funding and with such funding often come regulations and restrictions. This can possibly dissuade TD practitioners from using the money where it is most needed. Wallace (2002) calls this problem the ‘development tail wags church dog’ syndrome (p. 135). Often, those funding development work exercise their power and find themselves dictating the work being done leaving the development workers helpless. Essentially Wallace is asking: “Does [church-based transformational development] really work for the poor? Does it really work for the church?” (Wallace, 2002, p. 133). The heart of Wallace’s (2002) article questions the foundational appropriateness of transformational-based development work.

While the number of recorded critiques of the TD framework may be limited, their relevancy should not be discounted. While some of these critiques call into question specific aspects of the TD framework, the underlying critiques that challenge the

appropriateness of working with a religious and spiritually based framework also need to be addressed. These critiques not only challenge Myers himself but also all researchers who operate under his framework.

Working with an essentially untested theoretical framework is not an easy process. This research project has chosen a relatively obscure framework so that it may be brought into an academic setting where more critical discussions can be held surrounding the core ideologies and practical applications of this framework. This project is limited in size and is primarily exploratory in nature, therefore, it does not attempt an impenetrable defense for Myers' framework. The critiques mentioned above are legitimate but they can also be aimed toward secular and traditional development frameworks. Participatory methods are growing in popularity within development circles and the question of guaranteeing open dialogue amongst all involved is just as relevant in secular circles as it is in spiritual ones. Even the critiques surrounding evaluation and assessment methods can also be directed at secular development projects. Modes of assessing should constantly be questioned and redesigned whether operating under a secular or spiritual theoretical framework.

Many other frameworks exist that could have been used for this research project. However, those models simply do not accurately capture the importance and centrality of religious belief that exists for this research project's study population. The following is an excerpt where Myers (1999) describes the dramatic difference between transformational development and traditional development frameworks:

Many of us in the World Vision family shared a deep-seated concern that development had to be holistic, by which we mean that development and Christian witness should be held together in a creative tension. In these early days we simplistically and incorrectly understood this to mean that Christian witness was something one added to the development mix to make it complete, just another sector, a wedge in the development pie.

In time we realized that this conceptualization was flawed. It implied that all other development sectors had nothing to do with spiritual things and that we were treating spiritual work as a separate sector of life. This meant that, in the

very communities where we wanted to be good models of the Christian faith, we were in fact witnessing that the material and the spiritual realms of life were separate and unrelated. Our struggle to escape this modern assumption led us to a great deal of inquiry concerning both the theology and the worldview of development. (p. 2)

Most theoretical frameworks consider spirituality as another 'wedge in the development pie' instead of understanding it for what it is – a significant aspect imbedded within people's lives. Critiques are important because they can lead to stronger models, for it will only be through critical investigations and inquiries that the Transformational Development framework will expand, grow, and gain validity. This research project aims to open a relatively untouched dialogue and attempts to ask whether a framework combining material and spiritual worlds is necessary.

Methodology

The methodology selected for this research project was determined because of its compatibility with the Transformational Development framework. At its core, transformational development encourages popular participation and holistic interpretation (Myers, 1999). Appropriately, this project employs an ethnographic qualitative methodology to explore the role of religion in the post-genocide Rwandan reconciliation process. In Creswell's (2009) words "qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). This project uses a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews as data collection strategies in order to gather first-hand information and allow the voices of the research participants themselves to be heard.

Participant observation and semi-structured interviews took place in Kigali, Rwanda over a period of 10 weeks. This location was selected because of its current focus on reconciliation and the presence of significant numbers of faith-based

organizations. Throughout the research process, participant observation was employed and data was recorded in a field journal including daily activities that were deemed relevant to the project. The journal included first-hand experiences as well as reflections and impressions that could be applicable in future analysis. The findings from participant observations serve to complement results from the interview process.

Nonprobability sampling was the acquisition process used to gather participants for the semi-structured interviews used in this study. Initial participant selection used purpose sampling. This is a technique where participants are selected based on their suitability to the research project as well as their existing knowledge of the research topic (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). As Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003) state, purposive sampling involves selecting participants “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly” (p. 713). After a few initial interviews had taken place, snowball sampling (also referred to as network sampling) was employed. These sampling techniques were utilized because of the advantage they give when researching in an unfamiliar location with no previous contacts or connections, however, it is important to be cognizant that the sample can be skewed towards a sample of likeminded individuals. Nevertheless, the sampling technique did result in a range of respondents as differentiated by age and gender. Ranging in length from approximately 10 minutes to 60 minutes, 14 interviews were conducted on the topics of reconciliation and religion in the context of the Rwandan situation. All of the interviews either took place at the participant’s residence or a location of their choosing. All participants were of the Rwandan age of majority or older and a combination of written and oral consent was gathered depending on literacy competency. All participants were told that anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed and that no personal identifiers would be used in the final report (interviews will be referred to numerically). Recorded interviews were self-transcribed and any recordings gathered in French were self-translated into English.

Limitations

Ideally, sampling provides a subset of the population where the researcher can draw conclusions about the entire population. However, as mentioned previously, there are certain inherent limitations when employing the chosen sampling technique. As Trow (1957) argues, snowball sampling does not produce a representative sample. However, Bernard (1995) argues that snowball sampling can be very effective when studying small populations and is valuable when studying communities. This study is relatively small and the results, therefore, will not be used to draw conclusions about the entire population. Remaining at the micro-level, the desire of this project is that the data gathered during the interview process will be rich enough to compensate for the small and limited sample size.

Another unavoidable limitation is the fact that as a white, foreign woman some participants will be guarded and unwilling to disclose certain information. Rwandan culture is highly social and personal; as an outsider, it is difficult to attain a certain level of familiarity with the participants before engaging in interviews. Because of this distance some participants will not feel at ease to discuss personal feelings and details about their lives or about their country of residence. To try and offset the disadvantage of being a highly visible outsider most interviews were conducted during the second half of my research trip so that connections could be established and relationships developed prior to the interview process.

Two other limitations exist in the form of a language barrier and an emotional barrier. Rwanda has three official languages: Kinyarwanda, French, and English. Both French and English were understood by the primary investigator, however, Kinyarwanda was well beyond the abilities of the researcher. Interviews were all conducted in either French or English and translated and transcribed accordingly into English. Despite being convenient for the researcher, participants were expressing themselves in a second or

third language. This sometimes proved difficult for participants as on several occasions they stated that they were unfamiliar with how to express what they were thinking in English. Often, the participant was able to reword their thoughts and express themselves, nevertheless, speaking in a foreign language does present a limitation. Secondly, an emotional barrier exists when discussing painful memories. All of the interview participants were old enough at the time of Rwanda's 1994 genocide to have working memories of the terrible violence that occurred. While a researcher can offer empathy, there is an emotional barrier that prevents the interviewer from ever fully understanding the full extent of impact caused by the genocide. Some participants may have been unable or unwilling to discuss certain details because they would prefer to remain emotionally distanced from certain memories. Both language and emotional barriers were consistent limitations throughout the research process.

Ultimately, this project aims to explore the role of faith-based organizations in the post-genocide reconciliation process in Rwanda. Being primarily exploratory and despite its inherent limitations, the study aims to primarily raise questions and open up the topic for further discussion and investigation.

Chapter Three: Historical Background

*It is impossible for us to forget the past...
It is also extremely painful to remember.
We remember the victims of the past because they were our family and friends...
They should still be here.
We also remember the events of the past, it is a terrible unavoidable warning for our future if we
do not take active steps to avoid it all over again.
(National genocide Memorial Museum, Kigali, Rwanda)*

Far too often it is assumed tragedies of mass proportion 'just happen' (Katongole, 2009). The intricate and complex historical foundation upon which contemporary realities are built is sometimes misunderstood and unfortunately frequently ignored. Rwanda has a rich history and like most of Africa, its story is complex. This chapter aims to provide a brief overview of the nation's timeline spanning from the pre-colonial era to its present situation. This narrative can be extremely detailed. A complete account is impossible to recite within the pages of this chapter. Events that will be discussed in this thesis in a few paragraphs could easily fill many texts. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize and examine Rwanda's history. Therefore, there are two purposes to this chapter: firstly, to reinforce the importance of understanding historical contexts and secondly, to lay a contextual foundation for discussions in preceding chapters. The 1994 Rwandan genocide was not a singular event that erupted without warning. It is important to have at least an abbreviated understanding of the historical and cultural context. Within this narrative certain events reveal the slow-rising tide of hatred and violence that ignited in 1994 and if these events are not accounted for, it is far too easy to assume that the genocide simply happened without warning and without opportunities to prevent the violence. Each country has its own unique story; here is a brief examination of the Rwandan context.

Pre-colonial Rwanda

Historically, there have been three 'ethnic' groups in Rwanda: the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. The relationship between these groups is very difficult to understand, especially for academics studying the country from an outside perspective (Dowden, 2009). The English language does not even allow proper labeling of these 'groups'. The terms most frequently used – class, tribe, caste – do not match the reality (Dowden, 2009). While there is great debate surrounding the origins of these group names, there are certain generalized facts that are well documented.

Too often pre-colonial Africa is thought of as static and unchanging. However, life on the ground reflected a very different reality (Dowden, 2009). In Rwanda, even though people were divided by different ethnic groups a fluidity and mobility existed between these groups. Hutus and Tutsis lived in the same geographical areas, spoke the same language, shared the same names, worshiped the same gods, shared cultural customs, and even intermarried (Dowden, 2009; Lyons & Straus, 2006; Katongole, 2009). As Dowden (2009) describes: "In short, they were part of the same society, the same ethnicity. They cannot be described as separate tribes" (p. 229). Opposed to cultural characteristics, the differentiation between groups was largely based on social status and economic activity (Lyons & Straus, 2006). Although, it should be noted that there are physical stereotypes of both Hutus and Tutsis. Hutus are said to be shorter in stature and have rounder features while Tutsis are said to be tall and slender in build. These physical differences were often used as a determining factor during the genocide of whether someone would live or not. However, it is important to realize that these physical stereotypes were overused and oversimplified. As Des Forges (1999) argues: "With the increase in mixed marriages in recent decades, it has become more difficult to know a person's group affiliation simply by looking at him or her. Some people look both

'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' at the same time" (p.33). Deng (2010) also recounts an experience while addressing audiences in Burundi:

I remember going to Burundi, addressing groups, some of whom looked typical Tutsis, in the way we are told Tutsis look, and some of whom looked typical Hutus. I asked the foreign minister of the country after all these meetings: 'Can you always tell a Tutsi from a Hutu?' His response was: 'Yes, but with a margin of error of 35 per cent.'" (p. 3)

In the pre-colonial era, the majority Hutus, forming approximately 85 percent of the Rwandan population, were agrarian workers committed to their farming lifestyles (Lyons & Straus, 2006). The social status attached to being a Hutu was low. Comparatively, Tutsis were a minority. Constituting approximately 14 percent of the population (Lyons & Straus, 2006), they were pastoralists who reaped the benefits of a higher social status. Marginalized within society because of their 'primitive' hunting and gathering lifestyle, the third group, the Twa, comprised a mere 1 percent of the population (Lyons & Straus, 2006). However specific these classifications were, it was possible to change from being labeled a Hutu to a Tutsi and vice versa. By changing careers or by gaining a different social status, Rwandans could find themselves within a new ethnic group.

Although it is easy to assume that pre-colonial Rwanda was harmonious and peaceful, it is important to recognize that there were periods of occasional violence (Dowden, 2009). Lives were lost due to the upheavals - pre-colonial Rwanda was not perfect. However, as Kolini (2008) argues: "up until the late 1800s, society was held together in a successful way, with pastoralist and herdsman working with one another" (p. 69). Society was functioning and with the introduction of colonialism, the preexisting ethnic harmony changed drastically (Kolini, 2008; Lyons & Straus, 2006).

Colonial Rwanda

Marking the beginning of the colonial period, Rwanda was given to German rule in the late 1800s. Under German influence the “fairly fluid and flexible categories [of Hutu and Tutsi], ... became rigid, absolute and separate” (Dowden, 2009, p. 227). An inherently racial interpretation was introduced (Lyons & Straus, 2006). While German rule was relatively short-lived their presence started an institutionalization of once adjustable classifications, making race the central topic and the key to political power (Lyons & Straus, 2006). Following the First World War, Germany lost its control of Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999). The land of a thousand hills fell to a second colonial power – Belgium.

Racial interpretations continued into the Belgium colonialist era. Because of developed political structures within the country, the European colonists “concluded that they were in the presence of two distinct races [and] the Tutsi, they concluded, were a superior race” (Straus, 2009, p. 289). Through this racial classification, Tutsis strongly benefited from colonial rule (Des Forges, 1999). They were given powerful political positions and relished their authority. Racial classifications persisted throughout the colonial period. Obligatory identity cards were issued to all Rwandan residents in the 1930s (Straus, 2009). Ethnic group classification was no longer fluid, it was fixed and printed in permanent black ink. However, in reality the distinctions between Tutsi and Hutu were more complicated than racial or physical differentiations. While masses of Rwandans saw their arms, legs, and skulls measured and examined to determine their classification “some people were given a Tutsi identity card because they had more money or more cows” (Melvern, 2004, p. 6). One of the legacies of the colonial intervention in Rwanda is that it created an extremely segregated power differential and a severely reinforced racial interpretation.

Leading up to the period of independence, Rwanda saw a reverse in power within the small nation. Belgian colonialists began to offer their support to the previously neglected Hutu population (Des Forges, 1999). Having a numerical majority, the Hutus launched a 'Hutu Revolution' against the Tutsi minority and "by the time independence was granted in 1962, there had been a near complete reversal of representation, with Hutus dominating the state and Tutsis largely out of power" (Straus, 2009, p. 289). Many Tutsis had fled the country as refugees as waves of violence surfaced in the country. A large group exited the nation as a result of extreme violence in 1959. From their external location many of these exiled Tutsis would form a rebel movement that would later be named the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Since the dawn of the colonial era, hatred had begun to simmer within Rwanda. Originally, Hutus harboured disdain for their Tutsi neighbours because of their positions of power and influence. As time moved forward, roles were reversed. Tutsis then found themselves seething under the control of the once subordinate Hutus. As unrest grew within the nation and civil war was germinating, the response of the ruling Hutus would ultimately set the stage for the massacre of 1994. As Lyons and Straus (2006) explain:

Hard-liners within the ruling elite branded Tutsis and their supporters the enemy; they financed racist media, both print and radio; they started a youth program – the *interahamwe* – to promote the ruling MRND party; and military officers beefed up the army, imported weapons, and designed a civil defense program. (p. 28-29)

Rwanda was ruled by racism – a learned racism (Kolini, 2008). And the nation would soon learn a painful lesson: "it is not difficult to kill another human being when you believe they are less than human" (Kolini, 2008, p. 47). It can be argued that the colonial era in Rwanda brought some advances but it is hard to ignore that with these 'advances' came a culture of discrimination, segregation, and racism. The racial interpretation of Hutu and Tutsi had become so ingrained through the colonial use of identity cards that after independence Rwandans did not even get rid of these identification cards; their

new 'identities' became so entrenched in everyday life that the racial interpretation became natural (Katongole, 2009). The stage had been set for genocide.

Genocide

The Rwandan genocide is a traumatic story to tell. Lyons and Straus (2006) explain why it is nearly impossible to properly explain the story of the genocide:

As a single episode of violence, it is unimaginable. Any single killing incident is difficult – and disturbing – to imagine. It is even harder to conceive of the killing of a family, let alone the hunting down and annihilation of Tutsi civilians from one Rwandan town. But how can anyone – including those who directly witnessed the event – conceptualize a three-month, face-to-face extermination of at least half a million civilians, day after day, town after town? The violence is too vast, too shocking, and too disruptive to imagine. (p. 14)

The intimacy of the murders is hard to imagine. Chaos was all consuming as neighbours killed neighbours and husbands killed wives.

An extermination campaign began on the night of April 6, 1994. The sun had set on Kigali and the lights of the plane transporting the Rwandan President, Juvénal Habyarimana, the Burundian president, and other Rwandan officials approached the Kigali International Airport. Minutes before landing another set of lights filled the sky; rockets were launched from the ground on a tragic trajectory colliding midair with the small plane. All aboard the plane were killed upon impact. There was immediate confusion on the ground about the circumstances surrounding the crash.¹¹ The opportunity given by this moment of confusion and heightened adrenaline was seized. The genocide had begun.

Gunshots were heard echoing throughout the capital of Kigali within minutes of the assassination of the President. Roadblocks were set up on main thoroughfares. The violence spread quickly. Hutu extremists had properly prepared for this moment: they were ready. High-level politicians, sympathetic to the Tutsi plight, were targeted first

¹¹ To this day no one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

followed by systematic manhunts for Tutsi civilians and moderate Hutus (Lyons & Straus, 2006). Tutsis were hunted down in their homes, in the streets, in schools, in fields, and in churches (Lyons & Straus, 2006). Nowhere could be presumed safe. The killing was intimate: face-to-face. As Katongole (2009) explains: “there was, for the most part, no technology to distance the killer from his victim” (p. 32). The killing was the work of entire communities joining together in the madness. Many farmers picked up machetes and instead of using them to tend to their fields they were using them against flesh and bone (Hatzfeld, 2005; Lyons & Straus, 2006). Yielding rudimentary weapons, ordinary Rwandans became murderers.

The extent of the violence that was unleashed in April 1994 is hard to fathom. Official death rates average between 800,000 and a million Rwandans;^{12,13} “that works out to 333 ⅓ deaths per hour, 5 ½ deaths per minute” (Barnett, 2002, p. 1). The Rwandan genocide, lasting just 100 days, has the unfortunate honour of statistically superseding the Holocaust in its death rate and “unlike the Nazis, who used modern industrial technology to accomplish the most primitive of ends, the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide employed primarily lowtech and physically demanding instruments of death that required an intimacy with their victims” (Barnett, 2002, p. 1). As recorded in the National Rwandan Genocide Memorial Museum, located in Kigali: “The country smelt of the stench of death. The genocidaires had been more successful in their evil aims than anyone would have dared to believe. Rwanda was dead” (National Genocide Memorial, 2012). Women, children, and the elderly were victimized alongside men. No

¹² Of the approximate 800,000 victims in the Rwandan genocide the majority belonged to the Tutsi minority but over 50,000 of these fatalities were moderate Hutus who stood in opposition of the rising violence (Waller, 2007).

¹³ The number of reported deaths range from 500,000 – 1,000,000 and some sources claim an even higher number. This paper will cite 800,000 because of its prevalence within the literature.

one was spared. The Rwandan genocide destroyed a nation and cruelty saw no limits (Melvern, 2004).

In early July, the RPF forces were able to seize control of the capital city and this victory is largely hailed as the final strike that effectively ended the genocide (Lyons & Straus, 2006). While there were still incidences of violence in the days and weeks to follow, it was clear that the RPF had control over the country and it was only a matter of time before the country could be accurately labeled as being in a 'post-genocide' period. It is difficult to imagine the reality of Rwanda in July of 1994. The country had essentially been destroyed. Besides the massive death rate, over two million Rwandan Hutus fled the country following the genocide, seeking refuge in neighbouring countries (Lyons & Straus, 2006). With the country in ruins it took time to even discover the true magnitude of the violence and fury that had swept through Rwanda. One of the truths painfully unearthed was the extent of the church's direct role in the genocide.

Slaughterhouses Instead of Sanctuaries: Dissecting the Hypocrisy of the Rwandan Church

The story of the church in Rwanda is one of contradiction. The role of the Rwandan church has changed throughout the nation's history. Unfortunately, the story of the church in 1994 is nothing to be proud of; it is a tale of unthinkable deception. The church was not merely a pawn in the game of genocide – it was a player and its role was not as hero. The church delved into the deepest chasms of deceit. Previously a symbol of unity and love, in 1994 the church upheld a doctrine of fear, violence, and duplicity completely reversing its historical calling. There are always exceptions to generalizations; unfortunately for Rwanda, these exceptions were few and paled in comparison to the damage caused by the church at large. However, it is important to recognize that the church once thrived.

According to numerous scholars, by the mid-twentieth century Rwanda was truly a 'Christian nation' (Cantrell, 2009; Katongole, 2009; Longman, 2011; Waller, 2007). By the late nineteenth century Anglican and Catholic missionaries were established and working towards the evangelization of the country (Cantrell, 2009). According to Linden (1977), as Belgian took colonial control the Roman Catholic Church became the established church of Rwanda. However, the 1930s saw the East African Revival sweep across the country adding fuel to strong charismatic growth (Waller, 2007). The Catholic Church had held a strong religious dominance within the nation but the "great movement of the Holy Spirit... brought new life to Protestant Churches throughout the region" (Bowen, 2004, p. 37). Bowen (2004) states that

the movement was also characterized by fellowship meetings, which were marked by mutual confession of sin, Bible study, prayer and testimony, and mutual encouragement. Studies of the rise of African Independent Churches have described them as movements in search of 'a place to feel at home.' In the revival many African Christians did find such a place and a genuinely African expression of spirituality. (p. 39)

While the Protestant Church did experience tremendous growth during the East African Revival and in the preceding years, it is important to note that the Catholic Church, statistically, still had the largest religious presence in Rwanda.¹⁴

As the history of Rwanda reveals, the nation went through several waves of civil unrest and episodes of violence. In 1959, there was a large wave of anti-Tutsi violence. During this time the church played a crucial role in protecting the Rwandan population. The church took a firm and clear stand against the violence (Koloni, 2008). Those persecuted sought refuge and found security within the church. As this wave of violence slowly ended the church was recognized as a powerful player, as an agent of peace.

¹⁴ During the 1991 census, 90% of the Rwandan population were self-identified as Christian with 62% claiming specific membership to the Catholic Church (Roth, 2004, p. 81). This fact is important, because in the years following the genocide the Catholic Church experienced a great falling out of its parishioners. Today, the Protestant Church maintains the highest membership.

As time moved forward, the church continued to see growth. The 1970s, as Waller (2007) argues, saw another “spontaneous ‘movement of the holy spirit’ throughout many Roman Catholic churches” (p. 140). During the latter half of the nineteenth century church growth was unprecedented and by the late 1980s, Rwanda was used as a model for evangelization in Africa (Katongole, 2009). Christianity was extremely well received by Rwandans. In the years leading up to the genocide, Rwanda’s Christian population continued to increase. According to a 1991 census, 90 percent of the population acknowledged a religious affiliation with either the Catholic, Protestant, or Seventh Day Adventist church (Bowen, 2004, p. 37; Longman, 2011; Roth, 2004, p. 81). In the moments preceding the genocide, Waller (2007) argues that “Rwanda was the most Christianized country in Africa... Catholic and Protestant churches were multi-ethnic (including both Hutu and Tutsis)” (p. 140). The church, influential in multiple spheres of society, was not relegated merely to the private sphere.

The church was a hierarchical organization and had played a key role in creating a society ruled by the Tutsi minority. As recorded in the National Genocide Memorial Museum: “The Catholic Church influenced education in Rwanda. Teaching increasingly conveyed the racist ‘Hamitic’ ideology, largely accepted by the church (Hamitic ideology portrayed the Tutsis as a superior group)” (National Genocide Memorial, 2012). But as colonial independence was won, and the Hutu revolution began, the church was actively involved in seeing this power structure reversed (Katongole, 2009). The role the church played in determining ‘racial’ hierarchies is an unfortunate consequence missionary Christianity bestowed upon Rwanda. As Katongole (2009) argues: “The missionaries knew far too much about Africa before they set foot in Rwanda. They already had in their minds all those categories of race and tribe, primitive and advanced” (p. 71). While the doctrine of Christianity has peace and love as core teachings, it would appear ‘that the blood of tribalism ran deeper than the water of baptism’ (Katongole, 2009; Rice, 2005).

Rwanda had created “converts not disciples” (Bowen, 2004, p. 42). Rwandan’s identities were not founded on their faith and as Katongole (2009) states:

Once this imagination and identity had fomented, Christianity made little difference in Rwanda. Christianity seemed a little more than an add-on – an inconsequential relish that did not radically affect people’s so-called natural identities, nor the goals or purposes they pursued. Purposes and goals were dictated to Christians and non-Christians alike by radio personalities and political figures. (p. 67-68)

The majority of Rwandans were professed followers of Jesus Christ and faithful church members but when the moment came they were unable to question the actions of the Hutu extremists. Unlike its role in previous waves of violence, the Rwandan church was ill prepared to handle the violent reality that erupted in April, 1994, to the detriment of countless victims who died as indirect and direct results of the church.

April 6, 1994 is a date forever etched into the history of Rwanda; however, the significance of this time of year is largely overlooked. ‘Holy Week’ is a week of solemn celebration in the Christian faith marking the week Jesus Christ was crucified. In 1994, Holy Week was observed days before the genocide began. One week before the genocide, Christian Rwandans were celebrating *Maundy* Thursday (*Maundy* comes from the Latin *mandatum* meaning ‘command’). This is the historical day that Jesus Christ sat and broke bread with his disciples for a final time giving them a ‘new commandment’ to “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-45). Ironically, within days, instead of laying down their own lives in the name of love, lives were being lost in the name of hatred. ‘Christian’ Rwanda had taken up arms.

The church was intimately involved in the genocide. These are just two brief glimpses into the reality that was happening on the ground:

Adalbert (a Rwandan man accused and found guilty of genocidal violence): “the Saturday after the plane crashed was the usual choir rehearsal day at the church in Kibungo. We sang hymns in good feeling with our Tutsi compatriots, our voices still blending in chorus. On Sunday morning we returned at the appointed

hour for mass; they did not arrive. They had already fled into the bush in fear of reprisals, driving their goats and cows before them. That disappointed us greatly, especially on a Sunday. Anger hustled us outside the church door. We left the Lord and our prayers inside to rush home. We changed from our Sunday best into our work day clothes, we grabbed clubs and machetes, we went straight off to killing.” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 140)

Jean-Baptiste (a Rwandan man accused and found guilty of genocidal violence): “Truly, the times no longer wanted us to worry about God, and we went along. Deep down we knew that Christ was not on our side in this situation, but since He was not saying anything through the priests’ mouths, that suited us.” (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 145)

Of all the sins of the church, Jean-Baptiste reveals an important one. Churches were silent. This sin of omission occurred when priests and pastors were mute and even denied the rising violence (Kolini, 2008; Waller, 2007). Because of their silence, parishioners freely raised arms against their neighbours and friends. Priests are meant to be the mouthpieces of God, and because these earthly ambassadors were silent and did not declare the sinfulness of genocidal actions then the belief was that God must also be silent on the issue and not be accusing them either. But even more disturbing than the sins of omission are the sins of commission.

Once places of sanctuary, churches became vast killing fields. It is reported many times how priests would call parishioners into the ‘safety’ of their churches only to hand the keys over to the killing squads (Smith, 2004). Children were baptized in droves because the priests knew that they would be giving them up to be killed before the end of the day (Kolini, 2008). Saur (2004) reports “the sadly famous *Radio Télévision des Milles Collines* (RTL), the Hutu Power Radio Station, broadcast announcements that God and his Mother were fighting on the side of the Hutus” (p. 215). As Meredith (2005) explains: “Across Rwanda, church buildings where Tutsis desperately sought sanctuary became the scene of one massacre after another” (p. 514). Compared to all other locations within Rwanda, Longman (1995) states that more people “died in churches and parishes than anywhere else” (As quoted in *Christianity and genocide in Rwanda*,

Longman, 2011, p. 163).¹⁵ The Rwandan church was corrupt (Kolini, 2008). Longman (2011) sheds insight into the extent of this corruption:

Organizers of the genocide exploited the historic concept of sanctuary to lure tens of thousands of Tutsi into church buildings with false promises of protection; then Hutu militia and soldiers systematically slaughtered the unfortunate people who had sought refuge, firing guns and tossing grenades into the crowds gathered in church sanctuaries and school buildings, and methodically finishing off survivors with machetes, pruning hooks, and knives... The involvement of the churches, however, went far beyond the passive use of church buildings as death chambers. In some communities, clergy, catechists, and other church employees used their knowledge of the local population to identify Tutsis for elimination. In other cases, church personnel actively participated in the killing. (p. 5)

An example of the corruption is Elizaphan Ntakirutimana who was a local pastor in Rwanda. He has been brought before the International War Crimes Tribunal to face charges set against him. He was found guilty of encouraging Tutsis to seek refuge within his church, then leading a group of trained soldiers and civilian militia to his church where approximately 8,000 Tutsis lost their lives (Simons, 2003). The church failed Rwanda in its time of need.

It is always important to remember that there are exceptions to the general failure of the church. There were many martyrs who stood up for their faith and their God in the face of unyielding evil (Longman, 2011). These martyrs embodied the doctrines they believed in: love, service, peace, and courage (Kolini, 2008). Rwanda was a Christian nation and many did embrace their faith fully. While it is important to acknowledge those brave enough to stand against the all-encompassing tide of death, they are the scattered exception (Waller, 2007). The overall message in Rwanda during the long days of genocide was not one of 'love and fellowship' but rather hatred, division, and power (Longman, 2011).

¹⁵ To provide some context to this statement: at one church alone, Nyamata Church, approximately 35,000 people were killed in one violent sweep (Tadjo, 2002, p. 11).

Satan's Involvement

For the sake of this thesis, it is important to briefly consider a rarely recognized alternative explanation for the genocide. On the ground in Rwanda, amongst survivors and perpetrators alike, there is a popular belief that Satan¹⁶ was directly involved in the genocide. The belief is that Satan and other demonic beings possessed the minds and bodies of the local Hutu population and that is how they were able to carry out their savage acts against the Tutsis. It is common for perpetrators to blame the devil. One convicted Rwandan explains his experience as follows:

it was as if we were taken over by Satan. When Satan is using you, you lose your mind. We were not ourselves. You couldn't be normal and you started butchering people for no reason. We had been attacked by the devil." (*Ghosts of Rwanda*, 2004, Documentary Film)

It is not only perpetrators themselves who give credit to the devil. John Rucyahana (2007), a former Anglican bishop in Rwanda, states "the devil reigned for a time in [the perpetrators'] hearts and minds" (p. xvi). For survivors, this popular belief helps to provide an explanation when no other rational one seems possible. The sheer scale of the genocide makes it hard to fathom that ordinary people could be capable of such violence. As Rucyahana (2007) argues "to wipe out an entire people group and make it seem as if they never existed requires the devil's special attention" (p. xviii). While it is impossible to provide quantifiable proof of this claim it is important for this investigation to briefly explore this explanation. Rwanda was a highly Christianized country at the time of the genocide and in the years following the genocide the religiously pious often turn to spiritual explanations and solutions to their pain and sorrow.

¹⁶ For Christianity, Satan is believed to be a fallen angel whose purpose is to destroy humanity and further separate man from God.

Chapter Four: The Quest for Justice – Rwanda’s Unique Approach to Achieving Justice and Reconciliation on International, National, and Local Levels

*There will be no humanity without forgiveness.
There will be no forgiveness without justice.
But justice will be impossible without humanity.
(Yolande Mukagasand)*

By July of 1994, Rwanda was in a complete state of disarray. The seizure of the capital city by the RPF signaled the unofficial end of the genocide. However, for weeks and even months afterwards there were isolated violent episodes. Despite the disorganization and chaos there was recognition that justice needed to be upheld and that those involved and responsible for organizing the violence must be held accountable (Parent, 2010). This quest for justice has gone through several evolutions and has adopted many different strategies. Rwanda has been creative in its strategies, moving beyond traditional retributive justice mechanisms by embracing large-scale restorative justice¹⁷ initiatives. To this day – 18 years later – there are still criminals being tried in national and international courts. The desire for justice, but also the need for reconciliation, has been recognized as a necessity and heralded as a national priority. Since the genocide of 1994, the quest for justice has taken place at three different levels: international, national, and local initiatives (Clark, 2010; Parent, 2010; Lyons & Straus, 2006). This chapter will briefly summarize Rwanda’s revolutionary use of restorative justice initiatives and also explore a few of the specific mechanisms put forth to achieve the goals of justice and reconciliation on all three levels.¹⁸

¹⁷ Restorative Justice: defined by Desmond Tutu in *No Future Without Forgiveness* (2000) as “the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victims and the perpetrators, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he [or she] has injured by [their] offense” (p. 21).

¹⁸ While many initiatives have been launched with the intention of achieving both justice and reconciliation this chapter will purposely focus on only a couple, due to the restrictions of space.

Serving justice after the genocide

The end of the 1994 genocide, four months after it began, presented a difficult political situation. Not only was there a change in political leadership, but the justice process was further complicated by the overwhelming popular participation in the genocide. There are estimates that “millions of Hutu participated in genocide, with some [estimates] going so far as to suggest that a majority was involved” (Waldorf, 2006, p. 33). In the days and weeks preceding the unofficial end of the genocide, thousands of people were arrested in mass waves due to accusations of acts of violence. Soon more than 120,000 Rwandans were imprisoned (Quinn, 2009; Waldorf, 2006).¹⁹ The prison population swelled and jails were pushed well beyond their capacity (Lyons & Straus, 2006). The government was simply unable to handle the overwhelming situation.

Part of the quest for justice was taken to the international level. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established by the United Nations in 1994. Located in Arusha, Tanzania, the tribunal’s goal was “to try the masterminds and others with the greatest responsibility in the killings” (Lyons & Straus, 2006, p. 16). While there have been many criticisms of corruption and a lethargic pace (Clark & Kaufman, 2008), the tribunal has managed to hand down several important verdicts (Lyons & Straus, 2006).

On a national level, conventional trials were the initial tool to prosecute those accused of genocide. Vast flows of financial support flowed in from the international community. However, despite the significant support, the national system could not handle the extreme number of trials and detainees. By 2002, a meager 6000 cases had been completed. At that rate, it would take the Rwandan government between 50 and 180 years to try all of those accused of genocide (Quinn, 2009; Lyons & Straus, 2006; Wolters, 2005).

¹⁹ The estimated number of Rwandans arrested and accused of genocide varies greatly, however estimates between 100,000 and 120,000 are found most frequently in the literature.

In this period of confusion and disarray many people were unjustly imprisoned. As Lyons and Straus (2006) describe: “not all detainees were in fact implicated in the genocide. Some were falsely accused because others held grudges against them or wanted their property” (p. 30). In fact, approximately 20 percent of those arrested were later acquitted after already spending several years in prison (Lyons & Straus, 2006).

The national government could not handle the number of trials needed to prosecute the accused. Rwanda was forced to invent new and experimental forms of local justice. The *gacaca* court system emerged. *Gacaca* was a reinvention of an ancient form of dispute resolution. Translated as “justice on the grass”, *gacaca* introduced open-air court hearings into local communities where whole communities would become a part of the justice process. (Lyons & Straus, 2006). Beginning in 2005 Rwanda launched “one of the most ambitious transitional justice projects the world has ever seen” (Rettig, 2008, p. 25). Over 9000 communities found themselves holding weekly trials in schoolyards, stadiums, emptied markets or wherever else could accommodate large groups of people (Rettig, 2008).

The process of *gacaca* would see a group of nine community-elected representatives educated about trial procedures (Wolters, 2005). The accused would then present themselves before this panel of judges, known as the *Inyangamugayo*, and be questioned about their alleged crimes. The first few sessions were designed to gather and verify data and testimonies. Once this period of gathering information was finished the court would move on and allow the accused to present their case and either defend themselves or confess (Wolters, 2005). This process was designed to be a community event with local participation being mandatory (Wolters, 2005).

While much faith was placed on the *gacaca* system from both the international and national communities, recent research and literature on the topic have revealed the downside and shortcomings of *gacaca* (Rettig, 2008; Waldorf, 2010; Wolters, 2005). The

intent of this section is not to present a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of *gacaca* but merely to present it as one of the main mechanisms initiated to bring about justice at a local level. Despite its shortcomings, *gacaca* revealed Rwanda's creativity and willingness to explore experimental forms of justice.

It is hard to disagree that following the genocide, one of Rwanda's main political agendas was to fight impunity. The varying justice mechanisms initiated since the genocide attests to this. However, in 1999 the government realized that it was lacking a critical element in their post-genocide reconstruction (Waldorf, 2010). While the government had been emphasizing retributive justice for years, the term 'reconciliation' slowly began to surface within the political arena and in 2000 the UN special rapporteur stated: "after five years of refusing to talk of reconciliation until justice is seen to be done, Rwandans now accept that reconciliation must be a national goal in its own right" (UN Commission on Human Rights, 2000, para. 180).

Rwanda's decision to embrace reconciliation signaled a significant shift towards embracing restorative justice as a viable tool to achieve justice and acknowledging that mass crimes do not merely affect individuals – communities, cities, and nations are impacted (Clarke, 2008). Restorative justice aims to restore "both the victim and perpetrator of crimes back into harmony with the community" (Quinn, 2009, p. 359). By bestowing dignity and empowering victims, nations are able to recover from atrocity as communities become active participants in the justice process (Quinn, 2009). Clarke (2008) argues that restorative justice offers the greatest potential for promoting reconciliation in societies recently affected by mass crime. He also states that restorative justice is most effective when used in conjunction with retributive justice but Waldorf (2006), Zehr (1990), and Halpern & Weinstein (2004) place restorative justice above retributive justice as it is far more inclusive and attains a stronger form of justice.

Advocates of restorative justice argue that traditional justice mechanisms have viewed crime as a violation of law (Clarke, 2008). However, from a restorative justice paradigm “crime is a violation of people and relationships” (Clarke, 2008, p. 340). Justice served must, therefore, advance reconciliation (Zehr, 1990). The capability of restorative justice lies in its ability to start at the individual level and rise to communal levels (Halpern & Weinstein 2004) where “apologies, community service, and other forms of restitution replace incarceration” (Waldorf, 2006, p. 14). Gilbert and Settles (2007) provide a comprehensive definition of the mission of restorative justice:

Crimes produce injuries that must be repaired by those who caused the injury... Restorative justice strives to promote healing through structured communication processes among victims, offenders, community representatives and government officials. It also strives to accomplish these goals in a manner that promotes peace and order for the community, vindication for the victim, and recompense for the offender. Under this restorative perspective, justice is not based on punishment inflicted but the extent to which harms have been repaired and future harms prevented. (p. 7)

Restorative justice is an adaptive form of justice. Its mechanisms can be customized dependent on its environment and context (Quinn, 2009).

Rwanda has embraced the restorative justice process by pushing for nation-wide reconciliation. To help achieve this ambitious goal, the reconciliation process is being promoted by two main areas. The first is the government-instituted National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC). The Commission is semi-autonomous and was created by the Rwandan government in 1999 (Clark, 2008; Seddon, 2008). Clark (2010) argues “the establishment of the NURC reflects the critical recognition that criminal justice and trials alone are not sufficient to bring about reconciliation” (p. 138). The Commission has three main goals: 1. To provide civic education; 2. To assess peace building and conflict management initiatives; and 3. To provide financial support to local organizations promoting reconciliation (“National Unity and Reconciliation Commission”, 2008). The NURC aims to bring national reconciliatory process down to local

communities and organizations. But as Parent (2010) argues “especially in the context of a divided society, it is imperative that national reconciliation initiatives resonate and/or concur with lower levels of reconciliations: ... individual levels” (p. 281).²⁰ This leads to the second way reconciliation is being promoted across Rwanda.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) have answered the cry for reconciliation. While it is impossible to say how many NGOs or FBOs are active in Rwanda their presence is felt in nearly every village and at all levels of government.²¹ This project studies two particular FBOs and their work in reconciliation. Halpern & Weinstein (2004) argue that “to be effective, reconciliation must arguably begin at the level of the individual – neighbor to neighbor, then house to house, and finally, community to community” (p. 567). Both of the FBOs in this study would fit within this context as they focus on the individual and then build upwards.

²⁰ During my time in Rwanda I had the privilege of meeting three commissioners who had been elected to sit on the board of the NURC, all three of them were extremely enthusiastic about the work of the Commission and praised Rwanda’s attempt to highlight reconciliation. They were unanimous in their belief that quantifiable good had come from the initiatives of the Commission and expressed that even though NURC is over ten years old it is still important and relevant in Rwanda’s contemporary situation.

²¹ The Rwandan Development Gateway NGOs database states that there are 276 active NGOs currently within Rwanda. While this number is a good start there are certainly other NGOs which either work without official recognition from the Rwanda government or avoid the NGO label. Neither of the FBOs studied in this thesis are recorded on the official list.

Chapter Five: The Land of a Thousand Hills

"I can hardly imagine what has happened in this country. It cuts into the soul and tries to destroy it. There is so much hurt but yet so much willingness to learn how to move forward"
(Perrott, 2011, Field Journal October 10).

Travelling to Rwanda with a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the country's violent history presents a challenge upon arrival: how do you seek to understand the nation and its people with unclouded eyes? As a researcher, my first week on the ground was plagued by continuous visions of past violence. I could only see Rwanda for what it was in the spring of 1994 – a blood soaked nation thriving on death and destruction. I couldn't see beyond the history books. However, it wasn't long before I moved out of a historical context and into the reality of modern-day Rwanda, still working through its struggles yet full of life and hope.

Based on data gathered during three months of field research, the intent of this chapter is to provide context for and to attempt to answer the two purposes of this thesis:

Purpose #1: is there a need for a theoretical framework that integrates the material and spiritual worlds?

Purpose #2: to explore the role of religion in quotidian activities and reconciliatory initiatives for a specific population in the Global South.

Divided into two sections, this chapter will address each purpose. The first will provide a brief snapshot of present-day Kigali, exploring the city's religious presence. This section will attempt to set the scene of what life looks like in contemporary Kigali and strive to determine whether, at least for a certain population, spiritual and material worlds could be considered one.

The second section will take a specific look at the role of faith-based organizations in the post-genocide reconciliation process. A brief history followed by a discussion of the current work of the FBOs, Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) and Youth With A Mission Rwanda (YWAM Rwanda), will be presented. Both organizations' models for reconciliation will be examined and the question of whether the Transformational

Development framework would be appropriate for this study population will be considered.

Modern-day Kigali

As the sun rises each Sunday morning, Kigali prepares for its pilgrimage to church. Walking the main streets, you are met by a sea of brilliant colour as women present themselves in traditional dresses and headscarves of every colour and pattern imaginable. Men and children are also dressed in their best with impossibly crisp, white shirts and polished shoes. The mingling of music and voices can be heard throughout the city as worship services begin. Walking down the short ten-kilometer stretch of the main road in Kabeza²² there are over a dozen churches, each crowded and some filled beyond capacity with people lined up outside windows and doors trying to join the services. Not only are churches full of people, but they are full of *passionate* people.

Rwandans do not appear to be overly expressive. On the average day, they wear somber expressions and are not easily excitable, however, inside church buildings demeanors change. Smiling, shouting, and singing all while their bodies sway to the beat of the music, Rwandans come alive. Ranging in size from small mud huts to enormous stone structures, almost every street corner houses a Christian church. Churches are not just prevalent in the Kabeza region but are a noticeable landmark across the entire city of Kigali and they are highly active.²³

²² The capital city of Kigali is subdivided into different regions. The organization Youth With A Mission Rwanda had its headquarters in Kabeza and this is where I was housed for the duration of my fieldwork.

²³ During my 10 week long research trip, I was invited to visit 7 different churches on Sunday morning.



(Figure 4 – Women gathered for a worship service at a local church)

The reality of Rwandan religious zeal is not only present on Sunday mornings. The city of Kigali is literally covered with physical acknowledgements of religious beliefs. Buses and trucks adorn stickers that proclaim the reign of Jesus Christ. While driving into the city, one bus proudly displays its sticker reading: “No Jesus, No Life” while countless others have similar stickers declaring Christian slogans. Businesses use the name of *Imana* (Kinyarwanda word for God) on their signs and posters. From a commercial building with a sign saying “Jesus is Able” to a warehouse with the words “Jesus Christ” painted in large white letters across its metal roof, it is impossible to ignore the public proclamation of Christian faith in Rwanda.



(Figure 5 – A sign above a local meat shop)

While pointing out city-wide and communal declarations of faith does little to prove where individual and personal levels of faith reside, it is important to mention because it draws attention to the surprising reality that Rwanda has continued to embrace religion despite its complicated religious, genocidal, and ethnic histories. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the church, once a safe haven in times of violence, in 1994, failed Rwandans. There has been a significant shift away from the Catholic Church, which held a place of religious dominance within the country in the years preceding the genocide (Roth, 2004). An evangelical movement has overshadowed the Catholic Church, particularly since the genocide of 1994. This study has chosen to exclusively focus on the evangelical church, however, it is important to acknowledge that the Catholic Church still exists in Rwanda. Religion has not lost its place of significance within the nation.

On trips to surrounding villages, it was not unusual to receive strange and sometimes harsh looks from local residents. But occasionally a few people would step forward and initiate or attempt a conversation. Most dialogues would involve a short personal exchange of names and countries of residence followed by a request for money. However, there were several occasions where first impressions were very different:

Walking into a relatively isolated village, we started passing some small mud huts. Children would yell and laugh as they see strangers walking by. The repeated chorus of *Mzungu*²⁴ would ring loud and clear. Then something different happened. An older woman, her face heavily lined with creases and clothes stained from years of use, came forward with an energy of someone much younger than her years. With no English or French it was still apparent that she wanted to say something. When language failed, she resorted to body language. Grabbing her cross-shaped necklace, closely resembling a rosary, in one hand and raising the other skyward, she repeatedly shouted '*Imana, Imana*'. While language may have been a barrier, the message was conveyed: for this woman the first and most important message to share was her religious dependency. Smiling and exchanging a prolonged handshake we slowly continued on. As our journey took us further up the dirt road, the older woman continued to shout and

²⁴ Kiswahili term loosely translated as "white person."

exalt the name of *Imana* until we were well out of sight. (Perrott, 2011, Field Journal)

Experiencing public transit systems in another country is always an adventure. It is exciting to learn the cultural cues for bus behaviour and it is a way to meet local people. While communication proved to be a barrier, often it was overcome by body language and limited dialogue. These are just a few of the episodes that took place on the bus:

Preparing once again for our Sunday morning commute to church, we changed into our 'Sunday best' and headed for the bus. Boarding one of the KBS²⁵ buses parked at the side of the street, off we went down the main street of Kabeza. We didn't have far to go. When we passed our bus fare to the ticket collector, diligently collecting fares from all the new arrivals, she took one look at us and asked, in clear English, if we were going to church. Surprised, to be asked such a question, we told her yes that we were going to a local church just a few kilometers down the road. She quickly asked if we could keep her in our prayers because she wouldn't be able to get to church that day because of work obligations. (Perrott, 2011, Field Journal)

After taking a week's vacation in the Northern province of Rwanda, Kyle and I were on the long bus ride back to Kabeza to begin preparing for our journey home. After several hours, Kigali was finally within sight. There was an almost tangible sigh of relief. Visions of escaping the cramped quarters of the bus were most likely on everyone's mind. A group of three women sitting in the row in front of us decided to express their joy by singing an exuberant hymn. Their voices were loud and clear and could easily be heard throughout the entire bus. They were not afraid to sing even in the presence of strangers. Also, present on the bus were Muslim passengers but nothing prevented these women from externally expressing their internal joy. (Perrott, 2011, Field Journal)

In a Canadian context it can be expected that public transit buses will inevitably have some graffiti. Usually it includes some unmentionable expletive or it will consist of a negative remark. However, when travelling into town one day the back of the leather bench in front of us revealed an interesting defacement: 'God has your best at heart.' (Perrott, 2011, Field Journal)

In Rwanda, on an external level, it would appear that religion still holds a prominent position within the country. The previous section is an attempt to share a brief glimpse of the religious presence in Rwanda at both a community and individual level. For a certain population their spiritual beliefs play a key role within their lives; it is the

²⁵ Kigali has one nationally run bus service called 'Kigali Bus Service' (KBS).

name they want painted on their business signs and it is the first thing they talk about. In Kigali, there is a population where spiritual and material worlds run parallel.

It is important to attain a basic understanding of the current religious context in Rwanda. During the 10 weeks of field research, there were multiple occasions where the Rwandan public pronounced their faith without provocation. Religion was a public not a private form of identification. While walking down streets you are often asked if 'Are you saved?' As Dowden (2009) reinforces "belief in God and the world of spirits is universal and powerful in Africa. In all the years travelling in the continent, I have met only two Africans who said they did not believe in God" (p. 312). In Africa, the invisible world merges with the visible and the distinction between the two becomes blurred. Ellis and Ter Haar (2004) state that "African philosophers have suggested that Africans typically have a unified vision of reality that encompasses the invisible world" (p. 15). While this 'invisible world' can refer to something different than the spiritual aspects of Christianity it reinforces that there is a very obvious fusion of material and spiritual worlds for a specific African population. The following section delves even further into the question of religion in Rwanda as it explores the work of two FBOs operating under a religious framework.

Exploring the role of religion in reconciliatory initiatives

While reconciliation, in contemporary Rwanda, is being heralded as a national mission it is practically taking place at the local, grassroots level. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), local churches, and citizen groups are largely in charge of ensuring that the message of reconciliation is turned into practical application. While the work of many of these groups was observed and discussed during the researcher's three-month field research, the contributions of two FBOs form the bulk of this investigation. The reconciliatory work of Prison Fellowship Rwanda and Youth With A Mission Rwanda will each be discussed in turn.

Prison Fellowship Rwanda

Pastor Deo Gashagaza is the founder of PFR. While sitting in his office sharing tea and bread, Pastor Deo began to share his testimony. The countenance of this middle-aged man was serious but as his story continued to unfold his eyes began to express joy and by the end of the discussion he was wiping away tears brought on by his memories. Here is an excerpt from the discussion with Pastor Deo as he explains the birth of Prison Fellowship Rwanda:

"I think [Prison Fellowship Rwanda] happened from my story. As I talked to you before, during the genocide I lost my sister, we were seven children. When I came back from Congo to Kigali I was thinking that maybe I would meet my sister but she died so I was not feeling well. I was trying to cry everyday and I had the feeling that my heart was going out... After that I felt uncomfortable, so I turned to pray. As a Christian, I took three days of fasting and praying and it was the first time hearing the voice, an audible voice that talked to my heart – 'Don't cry, inside your heart there is a gift to help other' – This was my first experience with the voice. So the following days the same voice came to my heart – 'Go into the prison'... I decided to go to the minister who was in charge of the prisoners for permission. So I get it and I went into the prison in the South... When I'm entering in the prison there were many people asking – 'Why is a man like this still alive?' – Because they saw me as a Tutsi. 'Why did he not die?' Some of them said – 'Kill him now' – and others would say – 'Please let him finish his preaching and we will kill him after.' So I was very afraid, and after that they decided to let me finish my preaching and after I finished preaching they opened up their heart. It was the power of the Word. I gave them a word from Isaiah 61 on how Jesus was anointed to preach to prisoners so this was a very tough message for them. Some of them said – 'Oh, we cannot kill him, he's like an angel for us, he's like a messenger' – and they would ask me

to come again. And from that time I became like that in prison... preaching to the prisoners and having some time with them...

So the following days the same voice came to me – ‘You are doing a good job but think about the victim also, it’s a double mission.’ So then I went to the community meeting where the women were raped and having HIV/Aids. I talked to them about how I feel after teaching the prisoners. I was sharing with them my story and some of them said – ‘You are foolish, you are a crazy man, how can you go to the prison? – and some of them decided to come with me.

The first time we went to the prison, I remember one woman was HIV positive and her husband had died and all her children. She asked a question – ‘If I come with you, can it make me happy to my heart and will I be able to sleep again?’ She decided to come and from that time she was released from her trauma. And I realized this was a mission of God, to do reconciliation making people together, teaching them God’s love, sharing the story face-to-face with victim and offender.”

Founded in 1995, PFR is a faith-based non-profit organization that believes both reconciliation and restorative justice are integral to the rebuilding of Rwanda (“Prison Fellowship Rwanda”, n.d.). Their official mission is to seek “[transformation for] the lives of those involved in and affected by crime through the good news of Jesus Christ, to pursue nationwide reconciliation, and to create peaceful communities and prosperous individuals” (“Prison Fellowship Rwanda”, n.d.). In 2002, PFR became officially affiliated with Prison Fellowship International (PFI),²⁶ the largest Christian ministry working in the criminal justice field (“Prison Fellowship International”, n.d.). As evidenced by a

²⁶ PFI was created in 1976, in the United States by Charles Colson after he served a sentence for his crimes in the ‘Watergate’ scandal. During his imprisonment, Colson became convinced that the real solution to crime is spiritual renewal (“Prison Fellowship International, n.d.).

prominent certificate hung on its office wall, PFR's work is not only highly recognized within Rwanda but also internationally. PFI chose Rwanda's office to receive the International Award for Creative Ministry for "the exemplary design and implementation of creative ministry strategies and innovative programming" (PFI). However, as described through Pastor Deo's story, PFR was formed from a very grassroots beginning and has slowly been built into the large organization it is today.

PFR began with a focus on inter-prison interventions. Starting with just Pastor Deo, the ministry slowly began to attract other workers. Messages about the life of Jesus Christ and the Christian call to forgiveness slowly began to filter throughout Rwanda's prisons. Today, PFR has prison chaplains in all of Rwanda's jails. As of 2001, "the organization claims to have inspired over 32 000 prisoners to confess and seek forgiveness of their victims families" (Hinson, 2008, Documentary Film). Their work continues within the prison system but because of the gradual release of prisoners in the early years following the genocide and the subsequent widespread release of inmates in later years into local communities, PFR chose to reinvent and redesign some of its reconciliatory strategy.

Taking reconciliation beyond the walls of prison, PFR adapted its methods and began to combine teachings on reconciliation with lessons on gaining practical life and vocational skills. The HIV/AIDS Women's Cooperative was created in 2007 because of the need to reach out to the massive number of women intentionally infected with AIDS through rape during the genocide. These women are offered vocational training in sewing and handicrafts and are also taught about the power of forgiveness and reconciliation. Help is also provided for the men affected by the genocide through agricultural and skills training in an attempt to hopefully offer the necessary expertise to sustain themselves. PFR also conducts training sessions on restorative justice and reconciliation in rural communities which may otherwise not receive the valuable

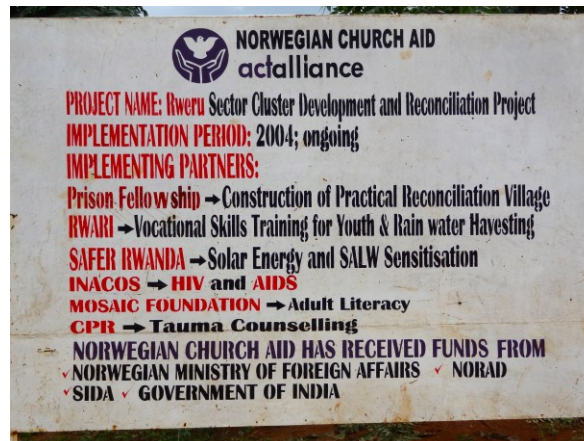
information. These conferences are interactive and involve participation from perpetrators, victims and community leaders. Recently, PFR extended its influence to reach street children and youth who have been left without parents or family to provide support. The Street Children and Youth Ministry (SCYM) provides a hot meal three times a week as well as counseling, singing, dancing, and bible teaching. SCYM also has a sponsorship program where willing donors can provide financial support, allowing PFR to follow up and provide more targeted vocational training as the child matures. Of all the programs that PFR offers, the one that will be the main focus for this section is the Reconciliation Village initiative.

As of 2010, there were six reconciliation villages located throughout Rwanda (“Prison Fellowship Rwanda”, n.d.). These villages are deliberately constructed to house those affected by the violence of the 1994 genocide. Here, both perpetrators and victims of genocide find themselves living and working together. PFR describes the program as follows:

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

Prison Fellowship Rwanda, by their own words, states that they incorporate religious values into their foundation and also their reconciliatory initiatives. This collaboration of religion, reconciliation, and development is what is explored through the second purpose of this investigation.

Reconciliation Village



(Figure 6 – The sign welcoming people to one of PFR’s Reconciliation Villages)

I was imprisoned because I killed people in the genocide. I killed three people but because I was in the militia group, I also counted for many other killings... I spent 12 years in prison. Before, I was worried about the time I was coming back to the community because of what I did. But when I reached there, I found out they were teaching reconciliation and helping people to be reintegrated and that's when I started thinking about what I had done and wanting to ask for forgiveness of the crime I committed. Them (points to the person from Interview A), I killed their relative and I came and asked their forgiveness and they forgive me. Now I'm feeling peace within me. (Interview B)

That one, that person (points to the person from Interview B), played a role in the genocide. They killed some of my family members but now we are living together. They came and told me what they did and they asked for me to forgive them because they had listened to the word of God to forgive those whom they offended and now we have come together. (Interview A)

Many of the testimonies of those living within the reconciliation villages assault the senses: former murderers living in community with their past victims seems unbelievable. Their stories can often sound like works of fiction, set in an imaginary world. The story of the two people from interviews A and B are merely one of the stories in a village full of inconceivable events. Others not only share their own stories, but feel they are the voice for their family members. Interviewee D talks about their relative:

She had 6 children and now she only had 1, the others were killed. Later when [it was] confessed who killed the children she recovered, though she didn't recover well... The person who killed them was her brother-in-law... While he was in prison he was taught and was transformed, he came and told the truth, that's why they got to know him. So my sister later died but she died when she had already recovered, she was not the way she was before... That person who killed

the children confessed where the remaining bodies were. They were in a toilet so they buried them. Even up until now he is the one who lives with the child who survives. So you see, he killed the other siblings and now he is the one who takes care of the youngest one. (Interview D)

The story of Interviewee D's relative reveals a level of reconciliation that not only allows for forgiveness but also allows for relationships to be restored and confidence once again to be entrusted. There are stories in this reconciliation village that go even further than child custody:

And even here they have reached a point where they have started intermarriages amongst them. When it comes in terms of intermarriage there is good relationships; love and they don't have fear amongst themselves... the person who lives in this home (points to the home beside the building where the interview took place), he married a wife that comes from the family that killed his family members... Three families here also married from the families that killed theirs, so you see how far they are. (Interview D)

Questions arise surrounding the plausibility and possibility of these stories of reconciliation. It is often easy to discredit stories of reconciliation especially if they are merely written or spoken words. But to physically see reconciliation put into action on a daily basis reveals a different level of reconciliation, one that goes beyond words: "to speak reconciliation only in the words without action – it doesn't make sense" (Interview D). An explanation of this ability to continue to live after the violence of the genocide and to push reconciliation even further than forgiveness appears to come from their spiritual beliefs. Interviewee A explains: "after the genocide, the thing was, it was God's will [I] survive". Interviewee A also argues that it is "based on the word of God [that] they forgave those who offended them." However, the journey to achieve this level of reconciliation has been long and hard.

Reconciliation is a process. PFR is highly aware of this and responding to that reality, their reconciliation model is a biblically-based, slow-paced, and repetitive structure. For PFR the process begins in prison. As mentioned in Pastor Deo's story, prison chaplains take the message of Jesus Christ within the walls of the prisons and

start to teach inmates about the power of forgiveness. Ironically, many of the inmates would have a certain level of previous religious knowledge based on the fact that over 90 percent of the country was reported as being Christian before the genocide of 1994 (Longman, 2011). However, interviewee B explains: “I received the word of God when I was in prison – to know its importance and the meaning of the actual words. Before I was just a churchgoer. I didn’t understand the actual meaning of the words.” This statement closely coincides with Katongole’s (2009) and Rice’s (2005) statement analyzing the pre-genocide condition in Rwanda “that the blood of tribalism ran deeper than the water of baptism” (p. 45; p. 5). Through the prison teachings, the inmates learn about the steps of repentance and forgiveness as they prepare for their future lives outside in the community. Not all choose to embrace this new knowledge but for those who do there is an opportunity to reconcile with victims of their past. However, when the time comes to leave prison, not all are excited for their new freedom.

For inmates preparing to reenter communities their future is full of fear and unknowns.

I had a suspicion that [the survivors] would revenge, so I never wanted to come out of the prison. I was so worried that Tutsis would revenge and kill me. (Interview B)

For me, by the time I was coming out of prison, I called my family to bring the money so I could hire a car. I thought people would ambush me, so I did everything quickly so they wouldn’t know what time I was getting out of prison... [the driver] come and took me right to my home... I spent some days in my home not wanting to go anywhere but my wife insisted I escort her in the market. I came in fear but wherever I met these ladies, they just greet me and ... my wife told me ‘don’t worry – reconciliation is here.’ (Interview C)

For some Rwandans reconciliation was something tangible. The statement that “reconciliation is here” (Interview C) indicates the significance associated with bringing reconciliation to villages.

In 2002, PFR (financially backed by the Norwegian Church Alliance) began to construct their ‘reconciliation villages’. The construction process was not completed by

contractors but by the future village residents themselves – both perpetrators and survivors together. This forced building partnership was a purposeful strategy of PFR's to put reconciliation into action. However, the process was difficult at first:

The cooperative is made up of the survivors with other people in the village so they can interact together and sustain reconciliation. For the first time for them to meet together was a problem especially when they told them to start making some bricks. The aim of telling them to make bricks together was to make them feel love to each other or get rid of the fear they had. But it was not easy for them. (Interview C)

By the time Pastor Deo called us to make some bricks for the homes there were so many people, especially ex-prisoners. We started digging holes, that's where we got the mud for bricks, and whenever us survivors would see [the ex-prisoners] digging we would think that they would want to cut us again and then bury us within that hole. And also, when these ex-prisoners see the survivors standing they would think that if they continue digging that someone would also cut them. So we continued suspecting each other but because of the reconciliation teachings we would get to know that there would be no one killed and when the homes were finished each side was given homes and it's then that we knew the problem is not about killing each other and that is what they are now teaching others. (Interview D)



(Figure 7 – The bricks used in the construction process)

Once the villages were constructed, houses were delegated to both survivors and perpetrators. Interaction had already begun through the construction process. However, it was through living in community that residents really began to develop relationships.

For the first phase of building, they built 35 homes. They would mix us, get a survivor and an ex-prisoner next to the survivor so we can live nearby and

interact. We started sharing everything as it is in Rwandan culture; to have food together or meetings, togetherness where they share. (Interview C)

PFR continued their reconciliation teachings even once residents were settled within their new community. While large steps had been taken, many of the residents still had not reached a place of reconciliation. However, as the residents explain, it was through repetitive teachings on reconciliation and a focus on the word of God that brought them to where they are today.

Seeing my relatives bodies in an open space being eaten by birds and dogs, I would actually start to revenge but the government opposed this revenge... Pastor Deo's teachings helped me to accept [perpetrator's request for] forgiveness. For the first meeting that I was taught to forgive, I wouldn't actually listen. But again through different sessions of teaching I reached the point where I feel to accept forgiveness, particularly based on the word of God and I forgave those who offended me. (Interview A)

The result of PFR's work in the reconciliation villages is significant. "Despite what happened to us, now we share everything, we live together, our children play together, we have peace, we don't have any problem" (Interview A). In talking about their lives since moving into the reconciliation villages and accepting the Biblical reconciliation teachings, the village residents expressed themselves with feelings of being freed from their past hurts: "Reconciliation helped release me from the anger" (Interview D); "When Pastor Deo and another pastor... [came] to teach us and help us to relate and speak about our worries and pains on both sides, it's when we feel free" (Interview B). Bishop John Rucyahana, President of PFR, has explained why survivors should forgive perpetrators:

Forgiveness releases them. The bitterness of the loss, the hurt of the loss, the missing of their loved ones, the desire to revenge, the desire for bitter justice against those perpetrators is so great and that eats them up. When they forgive they get released, it's not only serving the release of the guilt of the perpetrators it also releases them and then they can think right. They can contribute to the reconstruction of their country. (Hinson, 2008, Documentary Film)

When asked if the process of reconciliation can ever be finished or completed, PFR staff were quick to say that on some levels it might be possible but that there is always a

place for reconciliation, especially in the lives of Rwandans. This is why PFR places a large focus on empowering village residents. The intention is to have residents reach a level of personal reconciliation so that they can in turn teach others of their experience and this appears to be taking place. “So here, we have finished reconciliation so we have a committee going outside to teach reconciliation” (Interview D). At least one resident feels that this time of sharing is more of a moral obligation than a regulation:

I say that it is our responsibility to teach people reconciliation. I also think that there are people who are not yet accepted that they should reconcile. Whenever I go in a place and find people talking about Tutsis, I try to tell them the problem is not Tutsis but understanding who you are and then I teach them. (Interview C)

As mentioned above, reconciliation is a process and for these residents they are now an intimate part of this process. Their work is not over and as stated in Interview A: “I plan to continue teaching reconciliation”.

When talking with the staff of PFR about the reconciliation villages they are cautiously optimistic. While admitting that not everything has been easy, the results have been favourable.

We were actually getting a lot of cynical comments on PFR mainly from outsiders saying: ‘how do you know it’s working? Etc., etc.’ But actually going to visit villages and speaking [with them] – we had about a 2 hour interview with this farming cooperative and it wasn’t like set up, it was just kind of like we’ll meet together and decide if we can get this money and what we’re going to do about it. But it actually ended up telling us a lot about their stories and how they were living together now. It seemed very much like it wasn’t perfect, of course it isn’t going to be perfect, but they were getting on with things and they said that living together and actually doing things like day-to-day farming together and watching their children grow up dancing together, play together made them work on their own relationships a lot more and encouraged them too. So that was really positive. (Interview E)

When encouraged to discuss the role of religion in their reconciliatory programs, PFR staff explain that religious beliefs are:

really important because of what happened and how horrific it was. I think there is a need for people to have something beyond humanity to see that they can be forgiven and that they can move on because I think if you didn’t have that you would just think it was impossible. (Interview E)

But PFR also asserts that:

[they] are not here with the intention of changing people's mind about their way they live but we have to help the people about the reconciliation. So it's not about religion but it's about rebuilding, rehabilitating, bringing back relationship, love and togetherness of oneness. (Interview G)

Although PFR states that they are not aiming to change people's religious views, PFR as an organization stands on the biblical premise of love for one's neighbour.

Maybe the only religious belief that we normally stand on is love. And you see, love is not only for Christians but it is also for other religious people. In the Bible, for example, for us Christians who believe in the Bible, there is love there. There is a commandment of love... to motivate people to come back to their previous relationships... In the bible, it is where we read in Luke about how Jesus, when He was preaching in Nazareth He met a man called Zacchaeus and then Zacchaeus was a sinner. Jesus took Zacchaeus' sin to be pushed away... At the end of his teachings he became one of his friends because Zacchaeus repented his sins and then he became Jesus's friend. So you see the intention of Jesus was not about targeting only religious people but targeting also, rather than Christian people or people believing in Him but also actually his aim was to bring back those who did not believe in what he was teaching. And around Zacchaeus being his friend and going to his home and eat with him there was a kind of love. So, I think that's where [PFR's] love comes from. (Interview G)

Youth With A Mission Rwanda

Welcomed as a guest speaker during a reconciliation seminar, a middle-aged woman shared her personal story about how she and her husband had started YWAM Rwanda:

"In 1994 I was living in Nairobi, Kenya and I was really struggling with my relationship with God. I knew people were making bad decisions and killing others but I also knew that God was powerful enough to stop the violence – Where was God in this?! God gave me the verse Deuteronomy 32:4: He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.²⁷ I discovered that there is no injustice in Him and God began to teach me about His nature.

We decided to open our small home in Kenya to anyone who would be able to escape Rwanda. Although I was doubtful that anyone would survive. A couple arrived at our

²⁷ New International Version Bible translation.

home and I struggled with not knowing whether they were Hutu or Tutsi. If they were Hutu did they deserve a home?!

I began to feel a calling to go back to Rwanda but I wasn't sure if I was crazy or not because this was still during 1994. [Me and my husband and two young children] did go to Rwanda and when we arrived I didn't know what to feel. There were very few people in the city. I felt intense grief like I had never felt before – much like God... I had such a passion to rebuild Rwanda as soon as possible. I literally wanted to hold the hands of the victims and perpetrators and tell them to heal and let go of their guilt. I started to realize how much division and hatred existed in the church. I had threats of being poisoned but I continued my work. I began working with women who had survived the genocide (who had probably been raped, lost their husbands and their children). At the time the churches were preaching the forgiveness message; almost forcing Rwandans to forgive or else they wouldn't go to heaven. So women would go forward and say they forgave but nothing had really changed. Rwandans had been taught to suppress their emotions but the tears came and women started to open up. I started to listen to wounded people and I began asking serious questions about what forgiveness is... The enemy loves to keep us as cowards but the Lord loves to deliver us from fear and when He does incredible things happen that we can't totally explain... Forgiveness is an act of the courageous – a gift God has given to Rwanda.”

Founded in 1994, YWAM Rwanda has seen multiple stages of development. Today, YWAM owns several acres of property in Kabeza and has constructed over seven fully functional buildings. When you enter its gates and walk onto the property it is surprising how much development has taken place on such a small piece of property; buildings have been well constructed with wood-fired bricks as opposed to the cheaper mud bricks and the new Rwandan flag flies proudly in the middle of the compound.



(Figure 8 – The Youth With A Mission Rwanda property)

Youth With A Mission is an international volunteer movement of Christians around the world (“YWAM International”, 2010). The organization began in 1960 and has since spread to over 1000 locations in more than 180 countries (“YWAM International”, 2010). With the mission statement ‘To Know God and Make Him Known’, YWAM has a decentralized form of government allowing individual YWAM locations to design and implement their own development and ministry programs. YWAM Rwanda has six full time ministries and numerous temporary programs that are catered to specific needs.

APRECOM is an AIDS prevention and community assistance program designed to help families suffering from the effects of AIDS. The program provides spiritual, material, and social support through weekly meetings designed to encourage and allow a time of fellowship. A Widow’s ministry also exists to provide Biblical training as well as practical skills training for widow women in Kigali. Arise and Shine is an educational ministry. On YWAM Rwanda’s property there is one pre-school and two primary school buildings where a staff of full time volunteers teach the regular national curriculum as well as Biblical foundations. YWAM felt that Rwandan children were often undervalued so they started another children’s ministry called King’s Kids. Holding regular children’s camps during school holidays and youth programs every weekend, this ministry aims to

empower children and youth. There are several other full time ministries operating out of YWAM Rwanda as well as many temporary programs.

The four-week long School of Reconciliation and Justice (SORJ) that began in the fall of 2011 was a pilot project. The future vision is to have a permanent reconciliation school on the YWAM property. The school is an abbreviated version of a 6-month reconciliation school offered at a YWAM location in England which offers the school to residents from around the world. With a staff of 5 and a student size of approximately 15, the SORJ divided its teaching into 4 different sections. The first week was called 'The Journey to Reconciliation.' In this section students were taught about the Biblical foundation of reconciliation and were encouraged to begin to let God change their hearts. The second week was called 'The Forgiveness workshop.' This week is based on the work of Dr. Robert Enright, author of *Forgiveness is a Choice* (2001), who is a scholar on forgiveness. The workshop consists of five steps that do not seek to bring closure but merely present the tools needed to live life with forgiveness. The third week entitled 'The Kingdom of God' had teachings on the Biblical concept of the Kingdom of God and what it means to be a Kingdom dweller. The final week of the reconciliation school was called 'The Skills of a Peacemaker'. This week saw various leaders in Rwanda come and present on their practical reconciliatory and justice work.

My husband and I were invited to attend this four-week long seminar as active participants. The class consisted of approximately 15 students coming from Rwanda, Burundi, and Canada. The course was interactive and dynamic. Switching between traditional lecture format to hands on activities, the staff encouraged the students to express themselves and ask questions whenever they arose. Each morning began with thirty minutes of worship in the form of singing and dancing and each afternoon ended with prayer. One day a week was set aside so that each student could share their testimony. These were powerful sessions where some of the students were expressing

their stories openly for the first time and almost all of them had experienced the genocide first hand in some way.²⁸

As the SORJ began, both staff and student were unsure of their expectations surrounding what the course would hold: “I tried to keep my expectations very low and tried to come with as little expectations as I could because I didn’t know what would happen” (Interview K). The first week was challenging and pushed students to move beyond what they previously believed about reconciliation.

So I remember the first few days were really hard... I was like: ‘No, I don’t have to reconcile with these people who have killed my people.’ But I thank God – it was really hard. I thought even: ‘What am I doing here? I have to leave.’ But then later when [the speaker] explained what the Bible tells us about reconciliation and they gave us the picture of how Jesus came to this world and he forgave people who did bad to him and he was holy, I started replacing myself as Jesus and I saw that I have to forgive. Yeah, that really gave me a picture of what reconciliation is. (Interview H)

The first week of teaching revealed the main theme of the seminar – reconciliation as a holy mission. This theme flowed through the remainder of the four weeks. All of the teachings would come back to the life of Jesus and the idea that as Christians forgiveness and reconciliation should be a lifestyle. Biblically, Christians are commanded to forgive, however, reconciliation needs to start at the individual level and then move outward:

I learned many things in this seminar because I saw reconciliation is starting by me in my heart. (Interview I)

All things need to be set right – everything. But it starts in our heart. I was more focused on the political, more like institutional but it really does start in the heart. (Interview K)

Reconciliation is the center of ministry we’re supposed to be doing as a church...²⁹ I think the depth of what gives us, as Christians, strength sometimes is knowing that it’s something that God has asked us to demonstrate for the

²⁸ The following quotes and stories come from a combination of semi-structured interviews recorded outside of the classroom and participant observation conducted during the seminar.

²⁹ The ‘church’ being referred to is the Christian church as a whole rather than an individual local church.

world... We're commanded to forgive and bless those who would do harm to us. So in that respect, I'm imitating Christ and I'm looking to Christ as my model and my strength that I can do this through His power because he's already done it, He's forgiven me who was His enemy... To forgive is really being like Him, but I'm not alone, He's going to help me through it. (Interview L)

The picture of Biblical forgiveness is demonstrated through the life of Jesus Christ. His earthly mission came to a climax as he was offered up as a sacrifice and crucified on a cross. In his final moments, before death temporarily overtook him, he cried out: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).³⁰ The cross now stands as a symbol for Christians.

I think that to a certain extent, part of reconciliation can come about in a non-religious setting but I think that to get more of a complete reconciliation it does need to come to the cross. And I think that that's really the only way that we can truly restore and reconcile things is through the cross.

Interviewer: What does the cross signify for Christians? Like, what does that mean, if you bring something to the cross?

It's the fact that we are incomplete, we are unable to do it on our own. We are unable to restore these relationships, it's really only by the grace of God that we can and it's that grace that he's given us that we can extend to others. (Interview K)

Biblically, Jesus Christ called everyone to forgive each other no matter what race, gender, or age and this seminar taught students to embrace this and see the humanity within even those who had committed gross atrocities.

I thought the reconciliation in my mind as a Rwandese who suffered you know during genocide. I thought I needed to reconcile with a Hutu or people who killed the families and so I only called the major people who did something wrong to me. So it was very good to see the heart of God toward reconciliation and every human kind. (Interview J)

God designed each person, He created each person and He wants me to see what's best about that person, not just the negative part, or see them as less than human because they're not. (Interview L)

³⁰ New International Version Bible translation.

The process of reconciliation is not easy. Throughout the seminar, students were taught that reconciliation is a journey and sometimes it can be a long and painful pilgrimage but that with God anything is possible.

God is the one helping us to take the step to forgive those who did a bad thing against us... I know that God can do everything, I trust Him and I believe in Him that I can't do anything myself, He's the one who helps me to do everything and I know he's the one helping me now so I trust Him and believe Him. I was in this seminar because I wanted me to reconcile myself to [God]. Because I'm the type of person who likes to ask many questions of God and sometimes I get confused and I say God is using injustice. Like, I remember during the genocide... we were nine in my family and four died along with my father. And I was like: 'Why did God allow this to happen?' So when I'm in a hard time I think like God did this... I think: 'Why is this happening to me?' So during the seminar I learnt that God loves me and He wasn't involved when those things happened to me and the big thing I saw is that it's a journey and we call it reconciliation. (Interview H)

After four weeks of the seminar students formed a group. Anyone from the class who was interested in pursuing reconciliation further self-organized themselves and elected a leader and two other people to be in supportive roles. Feeling empowered from the teachings, the students wanted to share what they had learned with their friends and family.

I was thinking that I have to share with my fellow Rwandese what I have learnt from here... After the seminar we as the students who did the school, especially we as Rwandese, we felt that what we have learnt is important and we can't keep it to ourselves so we meet as a team and we said we can't stop talking about this. Now we are together, we have a team and we meet. We haven't done any [outreach yet] but we have a big plan. We plan on starting by talking to pastors and teaching in our churches and going to villages and talking about reconciliation. (Interview H)

Through their empowerment students expressed the newfound freedom they discovered through the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. "I learned that when we don't forgive we become locked in a prison of unforgiveness. So I found myself within a prison, even though I'm a Christian, I was in a small prison" (Interview H). The seminar ended with a session of self-reflection and honouring the vulnerability and honesty of each student. While the seminar came to an official end, there was hope that the reconciliatory work that had begun during those few days would continue. Hope was a

theme that was clearly emanated from the staff, students, and residents alike. It could be argued that it is the hope of a better future that drives Rwanda forward.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Forgiveness is not human – it's divine.
(Antoine Rutayisire)

Being exploratory in nature, the intent of this thesis is that the dialogue that began within these chapters will not end with its final paragraphs. The Transformational Development framework and the role of faith-based organizations in reconciliation will hopefully be topics of further discussion. This chapter will provide a brief analysis of the relevancy of the TD framework in reference to both Prison Fellowship Rwanda and Youth With A Mission Rwanda and the importance of considering a faith-based alternative to customary reconciliation initiatives. Following this section some final thoughts on the current context of Rwanda will be given as well as a look at the theme of hope that seems to permeate Rwandan culture.

The Applicability of the Transformational Development Framework

The reconciliation models that both PFR and YWAM Rwanda are working under have parallels with Myers' Transformational Development framework. It is these similarities that would make the TD framework an appropriate model to use when researching the work of these FBOs. PFR and YWAM Rwanda operate under a Biblical mandate aligning themselves with TD's core belief that material and spiritual worlds should be treated as one. For both FBOs, reconciliation is seen as a divine mission. For PFR it is the message of Jesus Christ that is preached within prison walls and it is through teachings on the life of Jesus that inmates are taught to forgive. Forgiveness is a commandment for Christians,

Then Peter came to [Jesus] and asked, 'Lord how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?'
'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied, 'but seventy times seven!' (Matthew 18:21-22)³¹

³¹ New Living Translation Bible translation.

Jesus taught that forgiveness should always be given no matter how many times it is asked for. PFR maintains this teaching and encourages perpetrators and survivors alike to ask for and accept forgiveness.

YWAM Rwanda also operates under a Biblical model. In their reconciliation seminar, forgiveness and reconciliation are seen as something that can only be accomplished because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Students of the seminar were encouraged to be workers in the Kingdom of God pursuing peace and justice because that is what Jesus taught during His days on the earth. The importance of Kingdom work is reflected in the prayer that Jesus taught His followers: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Luke 11:2).³² Myers (1999) argues the same idea when he says that “you and I are the ongoing work of Christ in the world, his body here on earth” (p. 37). The work of both PFR and YWAM Rwanda aligns with Myers’ (1999) idea that development work needs a Kingdom response that reverses powerlessness.

When examining the applicability of the TD framework within the context of both PFR and YWAM Rwanda it is easy to see that Myers’ (1999, 2011) three main principles align with the work being done by both FBOs. The first principle “respecting the community’s story” (Myers, 1999, p. 138) can be seen by the emphasis placed on the sharing of each other’s stories or testimonies within the context of both FBOs. Through the sharing process participants become vulnerable and offer a part of themselves in a safe environment. PFR encourages perpetrators and survivors to express their personal experiences orally because it is through this process that healing can begin. The YWAM Rwanda seminar also set aside time for each student to share their personal history. Myers (1999) explains the importance of this action as follows:

³² New King James Version Bible translation.

... by listening to the stories of the poor, our new neighbors, and by sharing our stories with them, we become neighbors to each other. To have community we must have good neighboring. This takes time. Loving neighbors is not something that can be rushed. Something gets lost when we hurry. (p. 150)

Myers (2011) argues that the story of development belongs to the local population and it is important to have an understanding of where they have come from before development can be accomplished.

PFR and YWAM Rwanda's reconciliatory assignments also highlight participatory involvement, which is the second principle of TD. In PFR's Reconciliation Village initiative, residents are encouraged to work together in the construction process. It is through teamwork that walls begin to come down and the promise of future relationship develops. During YWAM Rwanda's seminar, students were constantly encouraged to express themselves and voice their questions or concerns. It was reinforced constantly that open dialogues can lead to more dramatic change. Empowerment is also a goal of TD (Myers, 1999) and is seen in the results of both the Reconciliation Village initiative and School of Reconciliation and Justice. Myers (1999) strongly advocates the idea of participation leading to empowerment:

... if the development story belongs to the community, then local participation is demanded as an acknowledgement of this fact ... Said another way, this kind of full and complete participation is a form of making systematic local autonomy or self-direction real. Communities discover that it is indeed *their* development process that is underway and that they are capable of exercising choice and becoming capable of managing their own development. (p. 147-148)

Allowing locals to carry on with reconciliation and development projects with little to no supervision was a visible result of both FBOs.

The third principle of "building community" (Myers, 1999, p. 150) is closely connected to the previous principle. Through empowerment, residents of PFR's Reconciliation Village expressed that they had started to take the message of reconciliation to neighbouring villages and had a desire to do even more. While, students of YWAM Rwanda's seminar self-organized into a group and elected their own leaders

with the goal of taking what they had learned and sharing it with their community. It is through the *caritas* love toward neighbours that community is established (Myers, 1999).

While neither of these FBOs set out to theoretically operate under the TD framework, in practice, they did. Both FBOs share the core ideology of TD that spiritual and material worlds should be treated as one and the heart of their reconciliation programs reflect this belief. Both FBOs also have strong Biblical foundations that are implicit within the TD framework. While this thesis is merely trying to *explore* the TD framework and its possible uses it is apparent that for FBOs such as PFR and YWAM Rwanda this framework could be an effective tool for both creating development projects and analyzing existing ones. Further examinations of the TD framework are certainly needed in order to make firm conclusions about its appropriateness. This thesis merely seeks to ask whether a need for such a framework exists. I would argue that it does. The TD framework approaches spirituality and religious belief from a very different perspective than most other theoretical frameworks. It is holistic in its understanding that for this specific population religious belief permeates every sphere of life, it is not just something that can be analyzed in isolation.

The TD framework needs to be pushed further. This framework has largely been untested within the secular academic world. An appropriate next step would be to take the framework and not just ask exploratory questions, but use the framework in its entirety and offer constructive critiques and suggestions for future reevaluations. There is the possibility that development projects will benefit from a framework that more appropriately understands its research subjects. The full potential of the Transformational Development framework has yet to be reached.

Even with a clear focus on a religious framework, the purpose of this thesis is not to convince the reader that the spiritual world does exist. However, such a framework is highly applicable to the perceptions of the large faith-based population particularly in the

Global South. Through this case study, it can be argued that for at least a specific and substantial population in Kigali, Rwanda, these two worlds are fused. Anyone working with such a population could benefit from a framework that takes note of the spiritual dimension of life. The TD framework should not be dismissed simply because it is founded on a specific religious system. Christianity is the foundation upon which many Rwandans live and an appropriate framework that takes note of this is a necessary tool for development.

Final Thoughts – Hope as a Way Forward

When talking with local residents, there is a sense that contemporary Rwanda is very different than it was even a few years ago. There is a recognition that reconciliation is a process: “a long and costly process. Reconciliation is not a one-time event, or a linear journey of progress” (Rice, 2005, p. 14). It seems that the nation has accepted that there is a hard period of mourning after an event like the genocide of 1994 but that it is possible to come through this grief. The faith-based rationale for forgiveness should not be discounted. For many victims and perpetrators it represents a convincing alternative to secular and political approaches to reconciliation. For certain populations it is because of the help of God that reconciliation can be accomplished.

At the end of '94 the things were very bad because of what we had seen or passed through. It was so hard for Rwandese and in that time, forgiveness was not easy for everyone but now we thank God because we see that God is doing many things within our country so... yeah we still have that history but in our hearts we feel this is a new Rwanda we received from God. (Interview I)

It's not easy but I think God will help us because He is the one who enabled us to do this thing. So, we can walk together to build our countries, our nations, our world as Christ's ambassadors.” (Interview H)

The journey of reconciliation requires hope (Rice, 2005). Katongole (2009) expresses his reaction to the current attitude of Rwandans when he states that “in their stories I remembered the hope that is able to erupt in the face of death, betrayal, and

madness ... [and] hope is what I want to leave you with” (p. 168-169). For many in the study population of this project, their faith is the source of their hope.

I really thank God for what He is doing in my country. (Interview H)

Rwandans have walked through the fire and have built something ... Lord do some more. (Interview L)

Long before genocidal violence erupted, there was a general recognition that God and religion were intrinsic to Rwandan society. A traditional African says that ‘God spends the day elsewhere, but He sleeps in Rwanda’ (*As quoted in: Sebarenzi, 2009*). However, when the savagery of 1994 was unleashed many felt that God had left Rwanda and abandoned the victims to their fate. In the words of an accused perpetrator

Many Tutsis no longer asked to be spared, that was how they greeted death, among themselves. They had stopped hoping, they knew they had no chance for mercy and went off without a single prayer. They knew they were abandoned by everything, even by God. (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 143)

Today, there is a surprising reality. Rwandans have once again turned to the Christian religion and found a new hope. They are hopeful that God has come back home to stay.

Rwanda is so ... people they are changing very quickly, they are developing in their minds [and] in their actions. I think now God is living, He’s staying in our country. (Interview I)



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Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Prison Fellowship Rwanda

Section 1: *Prison Fellowship Rwanda*

- What is your job title and give a short job description.
- What type of organization is PFR? Provide a brief history of PFR.
- Is there a mission statement for the organization that you know of? In other words, what is the goal of PFR?
- How long have you worked with PFR?
- Do you have to be religious (i.e. Christian) to work at PFR? Do you have to be religious (i.e. Christian) to be a participant in one of PFR's programs?
- Who decides who gets to work for or participate in PFR's programs? Is there a hierarchical employment structure?
- What types of programs does PFR offer? Have these programs changed throughout the past few years?

Section 2: 'Reconciliation Villages'

- Talk to me about the program 'Reconciliation Villages.'
 - How do these villages develop?
 - How do you decide their locations?
 - Who gets to live in these villages?
 - Do the inhabitants have the freedom to leave if they so choose?
 - Who has funded the program?
 - What is the goal of this program?
 - What are your daily responsibilities as a staff member when monitoring these villages?
 - What if problems occur in the village? What action can be taken? Who takes action?
 - How long have the reconciliation villages been in existence? Have their roles changed?
 - How do participants live in community? Are there struggles? Or is it harmonious?
 - Describe what daily life is like in a reconciliation village.

Section 3: Reconciliation

- What is reconciliation?
- Can reconciliation be achieved in a non-religious environment? How does religion (i.e. Christianity) play a role in reconciliation?
- What is the role of forgiveness in reconciliation? Can victims and perpetrators come to a point of reconciliation without forgiving each other? If not, what is true forgiveness and how is it achieved?
- What makes Christianity's 'forgiveness' different than a non-religious form of forgiveness?
- How do you know if you've ever reached a point of reconciliation?
- What are the major barriers to forgiveness/reconciliation?
- Are there tangible/physical results of achieving reconciliation? (i.e. increased economic status, healthy relationships, etc.)

- Have you seen reconciliation at PRF? If yes, what is life like now compared to before reconciliation was achieved?
- What reconciliatory processes are happening in Rwanda? How have they changed over the past 18 years?
- Should reconciliation be a project for FBOs and churches or instituted through political means?

Section 4: Future Goals

- What are the future goals of Rwanda in terms of reconciliation? Is there still work to be done?
- Do you feel that there will always be a role for reconciliation in Rwanda?
- Do you feel that PFR has accomplished its goals in reconciliation? Are you satisfied with the work being done in Rwanda concerning reconciliation? Do you have suggestions for other projects or improvements that could be made to existing reconciliation initiatives?

Section 5: Concluding Comments

- Is there anything else that we have not talked about that you would like to add?
- Can you suggest any other staff members at PFR who might be interested in participating in this study?

Interview Guide for Youth With A Mission Rwanda (Staff Members)

Section 1: Youth With A Mission

- State your job title and give a short description of your work and responsibilities at YWAM.
- What type of organization is YWAM? And how long have you worked for them?
- Is there a goal or mission statement of YWAM?
- Do you have to be religious (i.e. Christian) to work with or participate in YWAM's programs?
- Who decides who gets to work for YWAM? Is there a hierarchical work structure?
 - Who decides who gets to participate in YWAM's programs?
- What types of programs does YWAM offer?

Section 2: School of Reconciliation and Justice

- How/why was this school created? Give a brief history of SORJ.
- How/why was this school brought to Rwanda?
- How were the staff members selected?
- How were the participants selected? Was there an application process? Would you have turned anyone away? Would non-Christians have been accepted?
- How is the school funded?
- What is the goal of SORJ?
- How were the 4 weekly themes chosen?
- Can you briefly describe what each week was about?
 - Week 1: Reconciliation
 - Week 2: Forgiveness Workshop
 - Week 3: Kingdom of God
 - Week 4: Guest Speakers
- What are your hopes once the school is finished?

Section 3: Reconciliation

- What is reconciliation?
- How does religion play a role in reconciliation? Can reconciliation be achieved in a non-religious environment?
- What is the role of forgiveness in reconciliation? Can victims and perpetrators come to a point of reconciliation without forgiving each other?
- What makes Christianity's 'forgiveness' different than a non-religious form of 'forgiveness'?
- How do you know if you've reached a point of reconciliation?
- Are there tangible/physical results of achieving reconciliation?
- What are the major barriers to reconciliation?
- Should reconciliation be a project only for FBOs and churches or instituted through national and political means?

Section 4: Personal Reflection

- How important is your religious belief?

- Do you feel that there will always be a role for reconciliation in Rwanda?
- Are you hopeful for the future of Rwanda?

Section 5: Concluding Comments

- Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to add?
- Can you suggest anyone else at YWAM who might be interested in participating in this study?

Interview Guide for Youth With A Mission Rwanda (Students)

Section 1: Youth With A Mission

- Did you know about YWAM before this seminar?
- Why did you choose to participate in this seminar?
- Did you have any expectations for this seminar?
- Did you know any of the other participants or staff members before coming?
- What were your first impressions of the seminar?
- Had you ever done a reconciliation seminar before?
- How was the seminar? Did you learn anything? Did it impact you personally?
- Would you recommend the school to others?
- What do you plan on doing after the seminar?

Section 2: Reconciliation

- What is reconciliation?
- What is the role of forgiveness in reconciliation?
- What makes Christianity's 'forgiveness' different than a non-religious form of 'forgiveness'?
- How important is your religious belief?

Section 3: Rwanda

- How is Rwanda doing with reconciliation?
- What steps are being taken to achieve reconciliation? What else could be done?

Section 4: Concluding Comments

- Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to add?
- Can you suggest anyone else at YWAM who might be interested in participating in this study?