

# Konflikt, Trauma und Versöhnung

Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven der  
Konflikt-, Trauma- und  
Versöhnungsforschung

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**SoSe 2023**

Sitzung am  
21.06.2023



## Sitzung 9 | 21.06.2023

Verschiedene Möglichkeiten, mit Ambivalenzen, Wissen, Theorien und Fragen das Thema zu vertiefen.

- Wie ist Versöhnung möglich?
- Wo sind die Interdependenzen zwischen politischer Versöhnung und individueller Versöhnung?...

## Weitere Überlegungen (mit Rückblick auf die letzte Sitzung / Erarbeitung im Plenum)

- Ruandische Versöhnungsprojekte basieren häufig auf einer direkten Begegnung, einem direkten Gegenüberstehen.
  - Dabei folgen sie einem festen Verlauf, vorher fest definierte Begegnungsregeln. Das kann entlasten.
  - Die Situation nach dem Genozid brauchte möglicherweise eine Intermediation. Das feste Verfahren ermöglicht Kontakte, ohne dass die Konflikte jeweils wiederholt werden müssen.
  - Die Machtverhältnisse der Gewalt werden jedoch nicht umgekehrt, denn sie gehen nicht vom Täter auf das Opfer, sondern sie gehen in die Struktur ein; die Machtressourcen gehen in das Verfahren ein.
  - Doch betreffen die Nachfolgen der Gewalt ja auch die nachfolgenden Generationen. Wie werden diese im Versöhnungsprozess einbezogen?
  - Was ist genau das Ziel? Ziel der Versöhnung kann nicht die Versöhnung sein.
  - In der Gewalt des Genozids selbst sich Täter und Opfer zumeist nicht direkt gegenüber, jedenfalls nicht so, dass das Opfer gesehen wird, und auch nicht so, dass das Opfer den Täter gut identifizieren kann.

## Forts.

- Grundsätzlich kann man das Risiko der Retraumatisierung wohl kaum umgehen. Dies liegt nicht zuletzt auch daran, da Trauma eben keine Reaktion ist. Traumatische Nachfolgen begleiten das gesamte Leben danach.
- Ist eigentlich deutlich, welchen Nutzen dieser Versöhnungsprozess für den Einzelnen zur Verfügung stellt? Wem nutzt der Versöhnungsprozess?
- Versöhnung ist ein wechselseitiger Prozess.
- Wie kann eine Theologie, wie eine kirchenpolitische Haltung aussieht, die sich ihrer Verantwortung stellt? Die Integration von kirchlichen Institutionen in Gewaltpolitiken ist ja nicht neu. Gibt es bestimmte Formen von Autorität, die die Basis für diese Verwicklung darstellen?  
Welche politischen Ziele stellen sich über die religiösen/kirchlichen?

## Literatur zur Sitzung

*Article*

### **From “a Theology of Genocide” to a “Theology of Reconciliation”? On the Role of Christian Churches in the Nexus of Religion and Genocide in Rwanda**

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Received: 13 December 2017; Accepted: 18 January 2018; Published: 23 January 2018

## S. 3 f. | Komplizenschaft

When considering the churches' complicity in these conditions, four key factors stand out, the historic strong link between church and state, the acceptance and active involvement of the church in ethnic policies, power struggles within the church,<sup>5</sup> and a problematic theology.

1. Church and state in Rwanda. In order to gain a better understanding of the historic close connection between church and state in Rwanda, one needs to turn to the very beginnings of Christianity in this country.<sup>6</sup> At the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, Rwanda and Burundi were allocated to Germany as part of German East Africa. The Germans ruled in an indirect manner and supported the authority of the native king, Yuhi V Musinga. While the king was a Tutsi, Maria Brandstetter points out that neither all Tutsi belonged to a hereditary aristocracy nor did exclusively Tutsi belong to the ruling class (Brandstetter 1989). It was only the colonial powers who reinterpreted social categories in terms of ethnic categories.

In 1900, the so-called White Fathers, a French Missionary Order, entered the country, tolerated by the Germans. Cardinal Charles Martial Allemand-Lavig rie, founder of the White Fathers, aimed his mission strategy at converting the ruling class first before reaching the subordinates through them (Van't Spijker 1997, p. 239).<sup>7</sup> After World War I, Belgium became the new colonial power. The White Fathers were allowed to continue their mission work, as the Belgians relied on their cultural experience. When the Belgians introduced a political reform, they appointed almost exclusively Tutsi as district chiefs. While this policy already heightened the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi, the introduction of identity cards according to ethnic groups in the 1930s cemented it. On many levels, the Belgian authorities worked closely with the Catholic White Fathers as the "missionaries sought to make churches important actors in the country's political struggles" (Longman 2001, p. 168). When King Musinga resisted conversion, his son Mutara III Rudahigwa, a devout Catholic, was appointed as successor. Gerard van't Spijker states, "There was a perfect relationship between Church and State" (Van't Spijker 1997, p. 241). King Rudahigwa was baptized in 1943. In 1946, he dedicated his country to Christ the King. Increasingly, it became recognized that church affiliation was a helpful means in reaching political power. The elite began to convert, followed by the masses. The number of Catholic Church members grew steadily, even after the proclamation of Rwanda's first republic in 1961 and its independence in 1962. In 1990, about 65% of the Rwandan population belonged to the Catholic Church.

## S. 5 | Theologie

4. A problematic theology. The question remains, however, how the Christian message of love could be turned so easily into acts of hatred. Was the Christian religion in Rwanda a mere superficial façade? The mass conversions such as that following the baptism of King Mutara III Rudahigwa in 1931 might lead to the impression that conversion was a formal or strategic act rather than a holistic transformation of heart and mind. While this explanation holds some plausibility, it ultimately falls short. Rather, as Paul Gifford points out, “different Christianities” (Gifford 1998, pp. 325–33) exist simultaneously in Africa. Theology itself thus becomes a central factor. The brand of Christianity propagated by the White Fathers and other missionaries emphasized obedience and respect for authorities. While this is one aspect in the Christian Scriptures (e.g., Romans 13), other significant dimensions were neglected. The missionaries taught little regarding Christian responsibility for the other person. Topics such as the active love of one’s neighbor and even of one’s enemy (Matthew 5:44) went unnoticed. Christian theology itself must therefore undergo a critical hermeneutical analysis that comprises both the self-critical acknowledgement of problematic Scriptural interpretation and the quest for a more appropriate hermeneutics of relevant passages. This must include, as Jean-Pierre Karegeye points out, a “relocation of religious language” as the “strong interaction in political and religious speeches facilitated the way to genocide” (Karegeye 2011, p. 97). Religious language and theological concepts themselves need to undergo a critical scrutiny and re-interpretation.



## S. 6 | Friedensinitiativen

Next to these ecumenical endeavors, two particular church efforts for peace ought to be mentioned. In December 1991, Thaddée Nsengyumva, Bishop of Kabgayi and President of the Rwandan Episcopal Conference, issued the pastoral letter “Convertissons-nous pour vivre ensemble dans la paix” / “Let us convert to live together in peace” (Nsengiyumva 1991). The pastoral letter was both a call for the church to acknowledge its own responsibility in creating and sustaining ethnic divisions and a call for renewal within the church. During the genocide, Nsengyumva supported the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in helping war displaced in his bishopric<sup>9</sup> as he repeatedly made public appeals for the killings to stop. He was murdered on 5 June 1994. Another peace initiative was undertaken by the Presbyterian Church through their booklet *Ukuri kubaka igihugu* (“A Constructive Truth”), issued in February 1992. In it, the Presbyterian Church called for a strong stance against the current ethnic strife. At the same time, the church also acknowledged its own failures in not speaking out clearly enough against the ethnic violence in 1959. The booklet called on all Christians to act responsibly and in accordance with the Gospel of Love with regard to issues such as human rights, ethnicity, and refugees. Furthermore, one needs to mention that it was Pope John Paul II who, during a general audience on 27 April 1994, was the first to publicly call the ethnic violence in Rwanda a genocide and demanded for it to stop.

## S. 8 | Schuldbekentnis

The Rwandan churches have been partnering with the government in the national process of reconciliation, supplementing the government's top-down strategy with bottom-up approaches. In the following, I will utilize the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda (EPR) as a case study in order to explore the role of the Christian churches in dealing with the violent past. With about 300'000 members, the EPR is one of the smaller churches in Rwanda. However, its limited size accounts for its accessibility as a case study, in the context of which I also conducted a number of semi-structured qualitative interviews. At the same time, the EPR's engagement for reconciliation and peacebuilding are being echoed in similar ways in other denominations such as the Rwandan Anglican Church and the Pentecostal Church (ADEPR).

Yet it was the EPR that issued the first official confession of guilt, the so-called "Confession of Detmold" of 1996 (Confession of Detmold). For twenty years, it would remain the sole public confession of a church. Only in 2016 did the Rwandan Catholic Bishop Conference issue the "Announcement Which Closes the Jubilee Year of God's Mercy," asking for forgiveness for the role that some of its members had played during the genocide. The Bishop's Announcement refused, however, to address any institutional guilt but rather saw only individual members of the Church implicated. A few months later, in March 2017, Pope Francis surpassed the Bishop's Announcement by accepting both individual and institutional guilt as he asked forgiveness for the "sins and failings of the church and its members."<sup>14</sup>

## S. 8 | Forts.

The [Detmold Confession \(1996\)](#) begins with the acknowledgement that reconciliation must be preceded by humble confession and mutual forgiveness. “The Rwandan people will never be reconciled with each other unless each party accepts to kneel down before the suffering of the other party, to confess their own offense and to humbly ask forgiveness of their victims” (Confession of Detmold I). It is furthermore noteworthy that the [Detmold Confession \(1996\)](#) takes the complexity of the genocide into consideration by giving voice to all three parties involved, namely Hutu, Tutsi, and Western Christians. It thus resists any simplistic blame attributions. Its concreteness is a further characteristic of the Confession. The Hutu Christians confessed concrete crimes such as “torturing, raping, slitting pregnant women open, hacking humans to pieces” (Confession of Detmold II.1) and asked for forgiveness. Tutsi Christians expressed sorrow for their “blind vengeance” (Confession of Detmold II.2) and Western Christians acknowledged their responsibility for contributing “to the increase of divisions in the Rwandan people . . . since the arrival of the first Europeans in Rwanda” (Confession of Detmold III.3) and asked furthermore forgiveness for the “silence and abandon of the Rwandan people” (Confession of Detmold III.3) during the genocide.

## S. 20 | Dimensions for Peace and Reconciliation

As has been seen, the four dimensions of the EPR's work toward sustainable peace and reconciliation—theology, institutions, relationships, and remembrance—frequently overlap. Institutions such as the CFD and the Bonhoeffer Research Center, for example, focus on theological education while also aiming at relationship building. From these four dimensions, the following six aspects emerge as characteristics of the EPR's reconciliation and peacemaking work.<sup>17</sup>

First, the Christian message of forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. This message can provide potent resources in dealing with emotions of pain and suffering, revenge and guilt. Religious rituals such as prayers, the Lord's Supper, songs, and sermons can help give support to traumatized victims (and perpetrators) and "help to restore meaning and dignity to human lives from which those attributes have previously been stripped, or from which they were absent" (Cobban 2005, p. 1138).<sup>18</sup>

Second, effective mobilization for peace. By disseminating the message of grace and peace and its normative implications in the parishes throughout the country, the pastors and church staff engage in what Thjeard Bouta, Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana and Mohammed Abu-Nimer call the effective mobilization of "their communities and others for peace" (Bouta et al. 2005).

Third, creative engagement with cultural norms. Socially acceptable behavioral norms in Rwanda, for instance, exclude public expressions of sorrow such as crying. The sphere of religion, however, constitutes an exception to this rule, as traumatized church members can express their emotions during church worship in song and dance, a significant step toward inner healing.

Fourth, relationship and trust building. Bataringaya's emphasis on "walking with the people" demonstrates the EPR's focus on relationship building. The capacity to generate trust and to build relationships is emphasized by Scott Appleby as a major competence of religious peacemakers (Appleby 2006). Survivors especially can benefit from the relational and existential focus as they are oftentimes socially, spiritually, physically, and materially weakened.

(...)

## „Detmold Confession“

1) We, Hutu Christians, present at Detmold, recognise that our group has oppressed the Tutsi in various ways since 1959. We confess the massacres committed by the Hutu against the Tutsi group at different periods of Rwandan history, culminating in the genocide of 1994. We are ashamed of the horrors and atrocities committed by the Hutu towards the Tutsi: torturing, raping, slitting pregnant women open, hacking humans to pieces, burying people alive, hunting people with dogs as if they were animals, killing in churches and temples (previously recognised as places of refuge), massacring old people, children and the sick in hospital, forcing people to kill their own relatives, burning people alive, denying burial and thousands of other ways of cynically degrading and mockingly putting to death.

(..)

2) We, Tutsi Christians, present at Detmold, are happy and feel comforted by the demand of forgiveness made by our Hutu brothers and sisters. We likewise demand God and the Hutu to forgive the repression and blind vengeance which members of our group have taken, depassing all claims to legitimate self-defence.

"Inkoni ikubise makeba uyirenta urugo" (Justifying evil on the pretext that it effects a rival, ends up by turning back on the person who justified it).

We also demand God and our Hutu brothers and sisters forgiveness for certain arrogant and contemptuous attitudes shown to them throughout our history in the name of a ridiculous complex of ethnic superiority.

In der nächsten Sitzung  
weiterzudiskutieren

- Was ist eigentlich das Gegenteil von Versöhnung?  
Was ist komplementär oder interdependent?

Versöhnung

Vergebung

Frieden

Wahrheit

Konflikt

Gerechtigkeit

Verdrängung

Schweigen

Rache

Bewältigung

Abgrenzung