

Genocide and Religion in Rwanda in the 1990s

*“What Weapons Shall We Use to Conquer the
Cockroaches Once and For All?”¹*

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EUPHRASIE KAMATAMU WAS A notorious female *génocidaire*² and councilor of the sector of Muhima in the commune of Nyarugenge in Kigali, capital of Rwanda. She was described by Tutsi witnesses as regularly attending all the morning masses at the St. Famille Church in Kigali, carrying her rosary, often praying, and presiding over the prayer group Légion Marie in Muhima, before entering into politics in the early 1990s.³ According to London-based NGO “African Rights”⁴ she then became a member of *MRND*⁵ and her hus-

1. This phrase is adopted from the pro-Hutu racist Rwandan magazine *Kangura*; see Chrétien et al., *Les médias*, 114.

2. This is the most commonly used term in both French and English scholarship in order to describe those who actively participated in the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

3. African Rights, *Rwanda, not so Innocent*, 140, 142. The so-called International Human Rights Fact-Finding has been critiqued the last past decades. For this critique, see Alston and Knuckey, *Transformation*. It offers articles in relation to the existence or nonexistence of facts, the impact of the fact-finding process upon the facts themselves and the witnesses, the reproduction of hierarchies in the fact-finding process, the gender politics within this process, the implications of trauma on testimonial evidence, and the dangers of producing a “single story.” The works used in this essay that have been produced either by the London-based NGO “African Rights” or the New York-based NGO “Human Rights Watch” are products of careful field research, sometimes under the supervision of reliable, properly educated, and experienced scholars, such as Alison Des Forges or Timothy Longman.

4. *Ibid.*, 134.

5. *MRND* stands for the *Mouvement républicain national pour le développement*

band became a member of the extremist party *CDR*.⁶ She started recruiting for the violent, militant groups of *interahamwe*.⁷ It has been reported by witnesses that during the genocide, her house became the principal meeting place for the killers, while weapons and ammunitions were kept there. All of her children, according to similar sources, participated actively in the genocide and one of her sons manned a bloody roadblock next to their house. Euphrasie Kamatamu had a list of Tutsi to be killed and regularly checked the roadblocks since she was personally responsible for hunting down specific targets from the list of Tutsi and handing them over to be killed. Despite this, eyewitnesses testified having seen her regularly attending mass and wearing her rosary throughout the genocide.⁸ A Hutu witness, named Bosco Harerimana, interviewed in Kigali on August 4, 1995, confirmed: "Her whole house was full of assassins. But it didn't stop her from wearing her long rosary."⁹ Another Hutu witness, Ali Rigamba, interviewed on August 14, 1995, remarked on the contradiction of her actions: "I clearly remember how, during the genocide, Euphrasie always carried her rosary around, despite the fact that her hands and heart were stained with blood."¹⁰

Christopher C. Taylor—one of the few who lived in Rwanda and experienced the events during the first couple of days of the genocide—conducted one of the earliest researches on the events during the time when the genocide was taking place. In his book, *Sacrifice as Terror*, he argues that understanding the Rwandan genocide undeniably requires one to comprehend the historical and political preconditions of the event; however, what is also needed, according to Taylor, is an analysis of the social and cultural

et la démocratie founded by general Juvénal Habyarimana who ruled Rwanda from his coup d'état in July 1973 until his assassination on April 6, 1994 when his flight from Arusha, Tanzania to Kigali, Rwanda was shot down near the airport of Kigali, urging into action the hardliners of the radical anti-Tutsi faction of his party.

6. *CDR* stands for the *Coalition pour la défense de la République*, the far-right Hutu Power political party, founded in 1992 and allied with the ruling *MRND*. Several important members of the *CDR* were convicted by the *International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda* for genocide, and other crimes against humanity. The *CDR* had created its own militia, the *Impuzamugambi* ("Those who have the same goal"), which took part in the killings.

7. *Interahamwe* means "those who attack together" and consisted of young Hutu extremist militias, created in the 1990s by members of the Habyarimana regime. The *interahamwe* led citizens to kill Tutsi during the genocide, along with the Rwandan army and the gendarmerie. They were notorious for their cruelty; killing their victims with machetes, clubs with nails, and grenades.

8. African Rights, *Rwanda, not so Innocent*, 134–143.

9. *Ibid.*, 142.

10. *Ibid.*, 138.

factors.¹¹ That being said neither Taylor nor many of the other scholars have tried to understand the Rwandan genocide with an analysis of the *religious factors*, except for some brief mentions concerning the Church.¹² Of course, extensive work has already been done on the complicity of the churches and priests in the Rwandan genocide with remarkable results, both from foundational fieldwork,¹³ and also from more elaborate modern research with an overwhelming emphasis on the colonial and postcolonial period of Rwandan history leading to the turbulent years between 1990–1994 which is further explored below. The problem is that religion, in this case Christianity, is neither exclusively the Church as an institution, nor predominately its priesthood or the teachings that come from Christians' sacred texts. These are significant factors to consider, arguably, but the life of Euphrasie Kamatamu, already mentioned at the outset of this essay, is quite telling of how deeply connected religion and violence was in the 1994 Rwanda genocide; deeper than scholars have realized.

The present work seeks to establish the connection between the violent events of the 1994 Rwanda genocide and the Christian religion as experienced and lived by the people of this country, influencing each other, both top-down and bottom-up, in the everyday interactions and everyday aspects of their lives; from high politics and decision making to bloody roadblocks in a small village in the countryside. I offer examples of violence and religion beyond the sphere of the Church, mainly from three sources: 1) eyewitness accounts from everyday Rwandans who either participated in or became victims of the 1994 genocide;¹⁴ 2) evidence from the discourse

11. Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, 29.

12. What lies behind this attitude of scholars can be summarized by the following view within modern scholarship, which is far from being just an isolated voice: "While religious beliefs alone do not account for war, the processes through which religious organizations are formed, become involved in politics, and relate to particular conflict parties should form a central part of conflict analysis," Williams, *War and Conflict*, 129. That institutionalized religion takes the biggest share in discussions about religion and the genocide in Rwanda can be seen in Timothy Longman's contribution to a volume edited by prominent scholar Niels Kastfelt in 2005, which was limited to the role of the Church during the genocide, although the volume was dedicated to the *Religion and African Civil Wars*. See Longman, "Churches and Social Upheaval."

13. See Omaar and de Waal, *Who Is Killing*, 16–21; Omaar and de Waal, *Death, Despair and Defiance*, 862–930; Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 290–293.

14. Some of the most remarkable collections of witnesses (apart from those used in the present article) are the following: Malagardis and Sanner, *Rwanda, le jour d'après*; Bühner, *Rwanda: Mémoire*; Berry and Berry, *Genocide in Rwanda*; Lumurerwa, *Comme la langue entre les dents*; Janzen and Janzen, *Do I Still*; Kabagema, *Carnage d'une nation*; Kehrer, *Rwanda: Part de dieu part du diable*; Karemano, *Au-delà des barrières*; Muj-awayo and Belhaddad, *Survivantes*; Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare*; Straus, *Intimate Enemy*; de

of opinion and decision makers in the media and in public speeches during the genocide (April 7, 1994–mid July 1994); and 3) judicial records of the *International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda* (henceforth *ICTR*).¹⁵ Reli-

Brouwer and Ka Hon Chu, *The Men Who Killed Me*; Burnet, *Genocide Lives in us*. The use of personal narratives in history, integrated in a historical work that synthesises traditional sources and this “alternative” material is crucial in order to understand a complicated phenomenon such as genocide. Personal narratives help us to present marginalized voices (i.e. that of raped women or genocide perpetrators in jail), to provide subjective counter-narratives (i.e. that religion does matter for common people during genocide), and to work from a research base that is more inclusive. See Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, *Telling Stories*. For various ethical issues that are raised, mostly by Rwandans, in the use of their testimonies by third parties see Taylor, Sollange, and Rwigema, “The Ethics of Learning.” For the fundamental historiographical and methodological issues raised by the production and use of such personal accounts in history see Grele, “Oral History as Evidence.” The truth is that for studying war crimes and traumatic experiences, such as rape and genocide, oral histories are quintessential.

15. The *ICTR* was established with the UN Resolution 955 in 1994. On January 9, 1997, the first trial started (Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu) which sentenced the accused to life imprisonment. Since its creation, 83 suspects were tracked down and arrested, the majority of which were found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment (ranging from life sentences to serving some years in prison). The first to plead guilty was the Prime Minister of the Interim Government during the 1994 genocide Jean Kambanda. On May 9, 1998, before the Tribunal, he became the first head of state to ever do so in the history of international criminal law. By May 23, 2006, the *ICTR* managed to recognise the 1994 Rwanda genocide as an *established fact beyond dispute*. On June 24, 2011, the first woman in the history of the UN’s International Criminal Courts (Pauline Nyiramasuhuko) was convicted for acts of genocide. On December 20, 2012, the *ICTR* delivered its last judgement, but as of April 2014 three more suspects are still at large, to be tried by the *ICTR*. For more information see the website of the United Nations Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals at: <http://unictr.unmict.org/>. The site also offers online access to its rich Juridical Records and Archives Database. This paper brings forth a few preliminary results of a much broader and thorough research (currently in preparation) on the role of religion in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, conducted through the study of over 2,000 documents, which amounts to tens of thousands of pages (Acts of Examination-In-Chief and of Cross-Examination, Judgements, Appeals, Exhibits, and Experts’s Reports). The scientific community has raised specific worries with regards to the work of the Tribunal and to its agenda behind some of the trials. See Strizek, *Der Internationale Strafgerichtshof für Ruanda*; Moghalu, *Rwanda’s Genocide*; Essoungou, *Justice à Arusha*; Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*; Jones, *The Courts of Genocide*. For very interesting points on how unsuccessfully the *ICTR* tried to write history, failing to understand basic concepts of Rwandan society, see Wilson, *Writing History*, 43–48, 172–173, 178, 180–181. See also Combs, *Fact-Finding without Facts*, 106–118, 120–121, 125–126, 149–163, 176, 179–180, 186, 191–192, 254–259, 264–265. Combs provides extensive documentation from the *ICTR* on educational deficiencies and cultural divergences of witnesses, translation errors from Kinyarwanda to French and English, inconsistencies in testimonies (sometimes about core features of the events), difficulties of recollecting precise details several years after the occurrence of the events, high rates of discrepancies in all of the cases, contradictions among witnesses, imprecise or nonresponsive testimonies, accusations against proper investigation,

gious violence goes beyond the Church or the Bible, penetrating deep into the Rwandan society. It makes horrible actions—such as those committed during genocide—justifiable and acceptable. Finally, this approach poses important questions about the nature of religious violence in relation to Hector Avalos's scarce resource theory.

It needs to be understood that Rwandan Christianity is *not only* the Church itself as a place of worship and a meeting place for worshippers, or Sunday as the day of the Lord for praying and chanting, or the priests who communicated through their sermons with the laymen, or sometimes various visionaries and charismatic persons whose dreams and visions gave them a privileged access to apparitions of the Virgin Mary (as will be further explored below). Similarly, it does not deal exclusively with canons, synodical acts, ecumenical councils, Church Fathers, the creed or the Bible as written word. We need to examine things more carefully and thoroughly in order to realize how penetrating religion is in the Rwandan society, even during times of havoc and massacres. What role did religion play in the minds of those committing such atrocities or in those treated like animals that were brutally beaten to death, slaughtered without discrimination of sex and age, and butchered with machetes and knives? How did people equate these events to God's will?

The Church of Rwanda and the 1994 Genocide

Since the predominant aspect in studying religion in Rwanda is the established institution of the Church, we begin with a brief overview of the major and important contributions on this topic. The history of the Church in Rwanda has often been the subject of excellent studies. Therefore, what follows are the most influential works that help to paint a picture of the role of the Church during the violent political history of Rwanda up until the eve of the most notoriously violent phase of its history, the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Ian Linden's *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (1977) is beyond doubt an excellent work on the Rwandan Church during the colonial and early post-colonial period.¹⁶ Although without the hindsight of the 1994 geno-

many incidences of perjury, and so forth. Yet, most of this critique comes from a legal point-of-view. For historians, the matter is not about history *in* the ICTR, but history *from* the judicial records of ICTR. It is a rich and useful source, which cannot be overlooked, but admittedly had advantages and pitfalls much like any other major source in history.

16. Linden, *Church and Revolution*.

cide, Linden pictures the Rwandan Church as closely interacting with the political elite under the specific historical conditions in the region. Linden describes the missionary activity in the early colonial period as initially failing to Christianize the ruling elite and, until the mid-1920s, flourishing largely in the countryside and around isolated mission stations only to change under the Belgians when the region turns to Catholicism, creating a triumphant Tutsi-dominated Church.¹⁷

The formation of political parties in 1959 and the polarized climate during that year is, for Linden, a decisive point leading to the alliance between the Rwandan Church and the movement towards the self-awareness of those portions of the population that identified themselves as “Hutu.” Church leadership was forced to choose sides.¹⁸ On the one hand, the *Association pour la promotion sociale de la masse* (henceforth *APROSOMA*) was founded in November 1957 and soon became a political party (15 February, 1959). It was co-founded by an ex-seminarian, Joseph Gitera, often described as a radical Christian, and even sometimes as fanatical, who was the first to see politics as a Christian crusade and clashed with the largely Tutsi dominated Catholic clergy.¹⁹ In one of his letters, Gitera even threatened to castrate all Tutsi, without having any problem invoking the Holy Trinity in the same writing.²⁰ At the same time, the Flemish-speaking Belgian missionaries sympathized with those Hutus who were portraying themselves as *oppressed*, and the newly arrived European priests who represented a “social Catholicism” aligned with the *APROSOMA* movement because its Hutu counter-elite was promising to bring social and political changes. On the other hand, the conservative Tutsi court elite saw this alliance as colonial and anti-national.²¹ The court elite allied with northern Tutsi chiefs in November 1959 in order to create the political party *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (henceforth *UNAR*), which quickly demonstrated its anti-clerical, anti-missionary, and anti-Catholic sentiments. The French-speaking Belgian colonial administration of the entire region was also distancing

17. Ibid., 2–4.

18. Ibid., 6–8, 260.

19. Ibid., 251–252. Both *APROSOMA* and its journal *La voix du menu peuple* (*Ijwi rya rubanda rugufi*) were using radical anti-Tutsi rhetoric, which led to the pogroms of Tutsi in 1959 and in 1963–1964. The journal was calling young Hutu to free themselves from Tutsi slavery and saw the killing of Tutsi as a rightful act of vengeance. Joseph Habyarimana, the other co-founder of *APROSOMA*—who was sometimes invoking the “good God,”—was also responsible for the publication of the aggressive and heinous Ten Commandments. For more details see Semujanga et al., *Le Manifeste des Bahutu*, 43–61, 88–90.

20. Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 256.

21. Ibid., 254, 256.

itself from the Flemish-speaking Belgian missionaries and strengthening its relations with the Tutsi monarchy. It comes as no surprise that it also perceived the official institutional Church as pro-Hutu. Therefore, monarchists were seen tearing the rosaries of Christians and so on.²² Amidst all of this, in 1959 the radical anti-Tutsi party *Parti pour l'émancipation hutu* (henceforth *PARMEHUTU*) was created by Grégoire Kayibanda.²³ Educated Hutu who were closely aligned with the Church shared the ideas of Kayibanda. He succeeded in his remarkable rise to power—a landslide victory in the July 1960 elections—precisely as a result of support from the White Fathers,²⁴ the Catholic Church, as well as an anti-Tutsi-oligarchy peasant population craving for reforms.²⁵ As Linden concludes:

Whatever its intentions, the Church had presided over a dramatic transfer of power from the Tutsi noble lineages to the counter-elite of teachers and ex-seminarians.²⁶

Timothy Longman has undoubtedly contributed to our level of knowledge on the church of Rwanda. In his book, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, he argues that the various churches (predominantly Catholic, Anglican, and Adventist) actively shaped the ethnic and political realities during the post-colonial period that made the 1994 genocide possible. The churches even acted to legitimize the authoritarian regime of Juvénal Habyarimana²⁷ and encouraged the people of Rwanda to obey political authorities. What is important is that for Longman, an experienced field researcher for the New York-based NGO “Human Rights Watch” (field work

22. Ibid., 260–266.

23. Grégoire Kayibanda would be the future first President of the independent Republic of Rwanda. He was formerly a student at the Nyakibanda seminary and responsible for the so-called *Bahutu Manifesto* aimed at emancipating Hutu consciousness.

24. The so-called “White Fathers,” also known as *Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique/Pères Blancs*, were founded by the archbishop of Alger, Algeria, Charles Lavigerie, who by 1868 has started missionary activity in West Africa, and in 1878 in Central Africa. In the 1890s, White Father Jean-Joseph Hirth started the Christianization of what is today Rwanda, while at that point was still a German colony. For more information, see Strizek, *Geschenkte Kolonien*, 119–123. For a more detailed account, see Shorter, *Les Pères Blancs*; Nolan, *Les Pères Blancs*. In the 1960s, the White Fathers were credited with the oldest Christian presence in the region and their influence in Rwandan society was significant. For their activities in the early post-colonial period, see Linden, *Church and Revolution*.

25. Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 266–271.

26. Ibid., 271.

27. Habyarimana established a Hutu-dominated regime, which had seized power in 1973 from the *PARMEHUTU* government, established the Second Republic of Rwanda, and remained in power until the 1994 genocide.

in 1992–1993 and 1995–1996 from three Catholic and three Protestant parishes, as well as interviews and archival work), the churches in Rwanda made ethnic prejudices seem consistent with Christian teachings. They were too closely associated with the state in order to express any official, public anti-government opinion, or criticism. At the same time, the 1994 genocide, and all those committed before, served the interests of the church hierarchy, never clearly condemning in public the government-led Hutu violence since its beginnings. The first public declaration about the violence did not come out earlier than the May 13, 1994, by Catholic and Protestant church leaders, in which they implied that the *Rwanda Patriotic Front* (henceforth *RPF*),²⁸ whose advance had led them at a refuge in Kabgayi,²⁹ and the government are equally responsible for the violent events; careful never to label these events as (at that time a full-blown) “genocide.” After all, the political power has proven a very good ally for their interests in curtailing reform movements within the Church in the region. Heightening ethnic tensions undermined any democratic reform movement.³⁰

28. The *Rwanda Patriotic Front* was the main army of Tutsi while living in exile in Uganda and fighting the government army in Rwanda, especially since 1990 with constant intrusions into the Rwandan soil. In the days following Habyarimana’s death, *RPF* advanced as far as the capital of Rwanda, Kigali, and captured the densely Hutu-populated northern provinces of Rwanda, while the genocide was taking place in the rest of the country.

29. Kabgayi is 40 km southwest of the capital Kigali, in the southern province of Gitarama. At that moment, it was the center for the Catholic Church in Rwanda, with the oldest cathedral in the country. It also became a notorious theatre of mass killings during the 1994 genocide. While this was taking place one wonders exactly what was the assistant bishop of Kigali, Jonathan Ruhumuliza, trying to convey with a letter he wrote one day before, on May 12, 1994, referring (a) to the (exclusively Hutu-run) government which was trying to bring peace in the country against the rebels (of exclusively Tutsi stock) who were destroying everything; and (b) to the churches trying their best with the belief that “God will help his people.” (For the full quotation, see Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 191). It is not difficult to argue that for high-church dignitaries, the God (of the Hutu) was expecting to help the (Hutu) people. Indeed, a few weeks later in a press conference in Nairobi, high-church dignitaries were attempting to explain events in Rwanda as a result of all the mistakes the *RPF* had committed, aligning themselves to the genocidal government. See Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 192.

30. Longman, “Church Politics and the Genocide”; Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*; Longman and Rutagengwa, “Religion, Memory, and Violence.” For the Church’s silence during the genocide see also experienced Canadian journalist Hugh McCullum’s report: McCullum, *The Angels*, 65, 68, 73, 75, 79–82. Not far from this reading of Rwandan Church history are the following important works: Theunis, “Le rôle de l’église catholique;” Hoyweghen, “The Disintegration of the Catholic Church;” Bizimana, *L’Église et le génocide*; Ugirashebuja, “The Church and the Genocide;” Bjørnlund et al., “Christian Churches.”

For the May 13 declaration of Rwandan bishops, the NGO “African Rights” stated

Through his long and thorough research, Timothy Longman comes to a very interesting conclusion with respect to the role of the Church in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide:

The fact that people could desecrate church buildings and kill even at the foot of the altar or in the sacristy is not evidence of a lack of respect for Christianity or a shallowness of Christian faith. Instead it reveals the nature of Christianity in Rwanda as a politicized, conservative, discriminatory faith.³¹

The Rwandan people could hear the conspicuously anti-Tutsi message of prominent church leaders in the period leading up to the genocide and could see priests and pastors gathering the Tutsi in order to organize their killings on church property along with organizing patrols and barriers. All of these actions could not but assure them that their own participation was morally acceptable. “Death squads” were easily seen as “civil self-defense” by the sanction of the Church.³²

Finally, the most recent contribution to this topic comes from James Jay Carney who, in his work *Rwanda before the Genocide*, shifts his emphasis away from a top-down evangelization of Rwanda towards “early Catholic missions that supported a counter-cultural, pan-ethnic community of poor peasants and counter-elites.”³³ For Carney, the colonial and early post-colonial period (the 1950s and 1960s) represent the triumph of the “church from below.” However, what started as an alliance between Hutu leaders and

that: “[N]o-one who reads it in the light of the massacres and desecration of churches, and the murder of priests and nuns, can avoid being struck by its conspicuous failure to call evil by its name, the deliberate confusion of the war and the genocide, and the reluctance to confront those who were propagating crimes against humanity.” Omaar and de Waal, *Death, Despair and Defiance*, 896–897.

The bishops decided to describe the massacres as “tragic events” and not as “genocide,” at a time when they were forced to accompany the interim government from RPF-besieged Kigali to Gitarama, which was safer for the Hutu, but a notorious killing place for Tutsi; see Carney, *Rwanda before the Genocide*, 198. On June 20, 1994, in a common statement by Catholic and Protestant church leaders, RPF was again accused as being responsible for “this dramatic situation” with no mention about the responsibilities of the interim government. But, these were not the first instances since in March 1991, during their Easter message, the Catholic bishops preached love for the enemy, but failed to mention the Tutsi massacre at Ruhengeri only a month before; see Carney, *Rwanda before the Genocide*, 317, n.111). Similarly, during Lent 1992, the bishops’ annual statement spoke about Hutu and Tutsi fighting each other and communities having turned against each other, but failing to name or condemn the Tutsi massacre in Bugesera shortly before; see Carney, *Rwanda before the Genocide*, 197.

31. Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 197.

32. Ibid., 297.

33. Carney, *Rwanda before the Genocide*, 2.

missionaries towards the liberation of the poor masses and the establishment of a more egalitarian Rwandan society based on demands for social justice, democracy, and economic equality, very soon turned into another aspect of the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic, as “a mission to empower Hutu masses over and against perceived Tutsi oligarchy.”³⁴

Carney also sees the growing missionary support for Hutu parties in the late colonial period, less as a result of ethnicism, and more as the Church’s perceived institutional self-interest.³⁵ The Church’s fear was that the Tutsi-dominated *UNAR* was perceived as an anti-colonial, anti-Catholic, and anti-clergy nationalist (with alleged communist affiliations) party. However, out of this era and because of this fear, the ideology and the rhetoric that would ultimately culminate with the 1994 genocide was established.³⁶

The above-mentioned works are based on the words and deeds of the Rwandan bishops, clergy, and lay elites working in the Catholic media, as well as on intra-clerical relations between European missionaries and African priests, and their relation with the ruling political elite. This, however, does not offer the entire picture of Christianity in the region. The religious phenomenon of Christianity in Rwanda stretches beyond its clergy and bishops.

The God of Hutus and the God of Tutsis

We begin with a source that does *not* come from the days during the genocide, but is nevertheless one of the most well known and often cited in the majority of works on the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Léon Mugesera, who at that moment was vice-president of the *MRND* and close friend and advisor of President Habyarimana,³⁷ made a call to the Hutu people to crush their enemies, to cut their throats, and to eliminate what he called the “vermin,” the “snake,” the “hyena,” and the “cockroach.” The reason for doing so was

34. Ibid., 3.

35. Ibid. A few years ago, Bjørnlund et al. concluded that the Church of Rwanda: “. . . as an institution. . . did not have a clearly defined agenda, mentality, or policy, genocidal or otherwise other than perhaps becoming (and staying) powerful, and Christianizing the country. . . [I]t remained generally uncontested among Church clergy—from the beginning of colonization to the genocide—that the Church should become and remain powerful, just as the country should become and remain Christian.” Bjørnlund et al., “Christian Churches,” 159.

36. Carney, *Rwanda before the Genocide*, 4–5. The influence from Linden, *Church and Revolution* is more than obvious.

37. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform*, 96; Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 103–106.

evident: “[I]f someone is going to die it is because he already has the disease in him!”³⁸ This call was made during his notorious speech at Kabaya in western Rwanda, on November 22, 1992, at a *MRND* meeting, in front of a crowd drunken with beer, while listening to music, and dancing:

I am telling you the Gospel has changed in our Movement: if they slap you on one cheek, you will slap them twice on one cheek so that they will crash to the ground and will be gone for good!³⁹

Mugesera is indeed paraphrasing biblical passages and is beyond doubt applying a unique interpretation of them. He also declared that day, again by heavily paraphrasing the Bible:

I tell you sincerely as is written in the Scriptures: “If you allow a snake which has come to bite you to hang on to you, then you will be finished.”⁴⁰

That was the justification for Mugesera to claim in subsequent statements that the Hutu needed to work for themselves and exterminate “those bastards.” The irony in his speech is that a few months before, in March 1992, the Bugesera massacre of Tutsi by soldiers and *interahamwe* had taken place. He even recalled, in front of his audience, having asked a member of the Liberal Party:⁴¹

Do you not listen to the news; do you not know how to read? I then told him that he belonged in Ethiopia and that we would

38. The English translation was provided to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in the case of Prosecutor v. Akayesu as Prosecutor’s Exhibit 74 (received by the ICTR Criminal Registry on May 11, 1998).

39. Prosecutor v. Akayesu, *Trial Chamber I - Prosecutor’s Exhibit 74*, ICTR-96-4-T, 11 May 1998.

40. Ibid. Does Mugesera have in his mind Num. 21:4–9? It is hard to tell since the serpent appears very often in biblical narratives, mostly to symbolize the enemy, evil, Satan’s work, or even God’s punishment with sometimes apotropaic function. Mugesera’s Christian audience was very likely aware of the serpent’s clearly negative connotation.

41. *PL* or *Parti liberal*, like other democratic and republican parties, was formed in July 1991 and constituted the official opposition to Habyarimana’s monarchy as the result of his party’s agreement to separate itself from the state and establish a multi-party democracy. This was done due to the pressure from Western aid donors, together with the abolition of the identity cards. However, the identity cards were not really abolished and nor was the political polyphony ever really tolerated or accepted. This new political situation had, however, a concrete result towards galvanizing an even stronger and more aggressive sense of Hutuness and the feeling of threatening by the Tutsi.

send him there via the Nyabarongo [River] so that he would get there quickly.⁴²

Why is this speech important? According to New York-based NGO “Human Rights Watch,” his sentiments were frequently repeated on *Radio-Télévision libre des Mille Collines* (henceforth *RTLM*). His speech was tape-recorded and broadcast on national radio. Cassettes of his speech were copied and circulated in the capital Kigali.⁴³

Mugesera was not the only one using this kind of language. On April 14, 1994, Dr. Théodore Sindikubwabo, Interim President of the Republic of Rwanda⁴⁴ and head of the Hutu-majority party *MRND*—serving as President during almost the entire period of the genocide—delivered a speech that was also broadcast from the national radio. He incited people to “identify and denounce any person with ill intent who wishes to make us plunge back into the abyss, and furthermore” to “provide information to the soldiers and other security forces,” and to “continue to carry out night patrols.”⁴⁵ He promised that gunshots would be replaced by cries of joy at the end and that Rwandans would be happy to have contributed to “the building of Rwanda.” He concluded by stating, “God will assist us.”⁴⁶ Nowhere in his speech did he denounce the mass killings that were taking place by his supporters during his presidency across the country. Does this mean that Sindikubwabo believed that God’s assistance would come to Rwandans along the roadblocks, the night patrols, and the denouncing of people to the soldiers and “other security forces”? A few days later, he gave another public speech, which was broadcast on the radio asking people to locate the “killers,” “wrongdoers”

42. Prosecutor v. Akayesu, *Trial Chamber I - Prosecutor’s Exhibit 74*, ICTR-96-4-T, 11 May 1998.

43. Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 106; Mitchell, “Cultivating Violence,” 80. On *RTLM* see further below.

44. During the genocide, Rwanda was governed by an amorphous not officially recognized interim government-in-exile composed of the Rwandan Armed Forces, extremist militias, and militant members of the former government. That is why this genocide is often seen as an instance of state-sponsored mass murder driven by ideology in a context of revolution and war. For this turbulent period of Rwandan history the bibliography is vast, but the foundational works in chronological order are the following: Braeckman, *Rwanda: Histoire d’un génocide*; Reyntjens, *LAfrique des grands lacs en crise*; Prunier, *Rwanda Crisis*; Guichaoua, *Les crises politiques*; Braeckman, *Terreur Africaine*; Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*; Semujanga, *Récits fondateurs*; Guichaoua and Dégni-Ségué, *Rwanda, de la guerre au génocide*.

45. Prosecutor v. Bizimungu, Mugenzi, Bicumupaka and Mugiraneza, *Trial Chamber II - Continued Trial*, ICTR-99-50-T, 22 October 2007, 67.

46. Ibid. See also Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 291.

and “criminals. . .so that they can be given exemplary punishment.”⁴⁷ His speech ended with the following commands to his people: “Be brave always, we must not allow evil to triumph over good. Stay united always, and pray to God, who will hear our prayers.”⁴⁸ While his vocabulary of hate is masked behind general terms, God is nevertheless called upon to hear the prayers of a man who, according to an overwhelming number of witnesses, is reported to have visited various prefectures (Butare, Kibuye, etc.) in April and May 1994 in order to congratulate the people for their “work” during which some of the bloodiest episodes in the Rwandan genocide were recorded. So, what exactly do these “prayers” contain? As it was also the case with Euphrasie Kamatamu, already mentioned at the outset of this essay, prayers in real life can be very well combined with actions of the outmost cruelty. Does this also mean that the “good” which is to triumph over the “evil,” is represented by the *génocidaires* who were “working” hard during this battle between good and evil? If the answer is yes, then this “battle” is a nice way to mask “genocide.”

According to protected witness KK in the trial of Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu,⁴⁹ the *interahamwe* addressed Tutsi fugitives at the *bureau communal* of Taba, in front of the mayor, announcing that they had uncovered an alleged Tutsi plan to kill the Hutu. However, it is also reported that these *interahamwe* stated that they were going to put the Tutsi where the Tutsi had planned to put the Hutu, since their (*interahamwe*’s) God was never far.⁵⁰ The *interahamwe*, who were the bloodiest killers during the 1994 genocide, had their God by their side in trying to avenge a crime the Tutsi were allegedly about to commit. God was aiding the Hutu in the mind of *interahamwe* for their perceived act of self-defense. Protected witness KAB, in the case Prosecutor v. Dominique Ntawukulilyayo,⁵¹ testified that, in a

47. Excerpts taken from his speech recorded on cassette AV/919 dated 17 April 1994, and submitted as Exhibit D357(b) in the case Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko et al. (Case no. ICTR-98-42-T, 28 September 2005).

48. Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko et al., *Trial Chamber II - Exhibit D357(b)*, ICTR-98-42-T, 28 September 2005.

49. The accused was the mayor of Taba during the genocide. The *ICTR* sentenced him to life imprisonment affirmed on appeal. This information and similar ones on the fate of the accused persons named in this paper is taken from the official site of the *ICTR*.

50. Prosecutor v. Akayesu, *Trial Chamber I - Judgement*, ICTR-96-4-T, 2 September 1998, par. 285.

51. The accused was the sub-prefect in Gisagara, a sub-prefecture in Butare district during the genocide in 1994. The *ICTR* sentenced him to 20 years of imprisonment, a sentence affirmed on appeal. He was convicted of being responsible for the death of around 25,000 Tutsi refugees.

gathering he had attended in the trading center of Gikera, south Rwanda, in late May 1994, the president of the Court of First Instance in Butare, named Ruzindaza, held the Bible and said that those who were fighting the enemy with success would be rewarded by God.⁵² Similarly, in the case *Prosecutor v. Tharcisse Muvunyi*⁵³ the protected witness CCP remembers that the same Ruzindaza prayed asking that God should teach his Hutu audience to kill because the Tutsi grow up knowing how to kill and urged the Hutu people to leave behind no traces seemingly quoting the Bible: “God’s words say that everything will be unearthed [Luke 8:17?].”⁵⁴ Ruzindaza made no mention of the horrible, mass, and indiscriminate killings; therefore, there was no obstacle in quoting from the Bible, and mentioning God’s reward for those Hutu killing their perceived enemy, the Tutsi.

Justin Mugenzi, who was Minister of Trade and Industry in the Interim Government in Rwanda until July 1994 and who was recently acquitted by the *ICTR* on appeal, was accused by a witness in front of the tribunal for intentionally using quotations from the Bible in his speeches in order that his messages could be more easily understood by the Christian Rwandans.⁵⁵ During his trial, the prosecutor read passages from his speech from a few months before the official beginning of the 1994 Rwanda genocide, on January 16, 1994 in Kibuye, where Mugenzi attacked his political opposition; political parties which had joined a coalition with the *RPF*. In his cross-examination before the tribunal, Justin Mugenzi was asked about that speech, where he was recorded as having asked to observe one minute of silence in memory of the assassinated president Habyarimana “in order to entrust him to God,”⁵⁶ while he also attacked the Liberal Party with the following words:

52. *Prosecutor v. Ntawukulilyayo, Trial Chamber III - Judgement and Sentence*, ICTR-05-82-T, 3 August 2010, par. 338.

53. The accused was the commander of the *École des sous-officiers* (henceforth *ESO*) in Butare during the genocide, who was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, a sentence affirmed on appeal. The Prosecution alleged that Tharcisse Muvunyi, in the company of other local authority figures, went to various communes all over Butare prefecture to incite the local population to perpetrate massacres against the Tutsi. Muvunyi was accused of having participated directly in the provision of weapons, such as grenades, to the militiamen and ordered all the *ESO* officer corps to carry out massacres.

54. *Prosecutor v. Muvunyi, Trial Chamber II - Prosecutor’s Closing Brief*, ICTR-2000-55A-T, 15 June 2006, par. 1094, 1252; *Prosecutor v. Muvunyi, Trial Chamber II - Final Brief*, ICTR-2000-55A-T, 15 June 2006, 67.

55. *Prosecutor v. Bizimungu, Mugenzi, Bicamumpaka and Mugiraneza, Trial Chamber II - Continued Trial*, ICTR-99-50-T, 19 April 2006, 35-36.

56. *Prosecutor v. Bizimungu, Mugenzi, Bicamumpaka and Mugiraneza, Trial Chamber II - Continued Trial*, ICTR-99-50-T, 22 November 2005, 16-17.

Let it be understood once again; let it be clearly understood as it is said in the Bible, 'Woe betide them, woe unto them, woe unto them.' Woe unto who? Woe unto them, woe unto them, those who dare to ignore the interests of the people, to ignore the interests of which Rwandans have fought so hard for and they want to reduce that to nothingness, in order to please the *Inkotanyi*.⁵⁷ Woe unto them.⁵⁸

During the cross-examination by the prosecutor, Mugenzi admitted, "I used the Bible citation which in our context, the Bible was well known to Rwandans."⁵⁹ Under the pressure of the prosecutor he further explained, ". . . it was a way of expressing my unhappiness with the behavior of certain leaders, who instead of thinking of the interests of the population were thinking rather to please the *Inkotanyi*, this is clear."⁶⁰ In addition, when the prosecutor asked Mugenzi to provide an example of how that expression was used in the Bible, Mugenzi's reply was the following:

I remember there is[sic] a series of citations where the prophet Isaiah gives warning to the Israeli people, telling them those who were mismanaging the . . . their duties, different people, telling them that if they don't come back to God, they will face problems. They will face misfortunes.⁶¹

Even in a case where the accused was acquitted, the cross-examination process revealed that Mugenzi tried to entice his audience to have a negative disposition towards *Inkotanyi* sympathizers in general and all those

57. *Inkotanyi* means "invisible" and refers to the Tutsi soldiers who were living in exile in Uganda and formed the army, which opposed the Habyarimana regime, later to be called the *RPF*. This term also describes the accomplices and the sympathizers of *RPF*. It ended up including all Tutsi and those opposed to Habyarimana regime. To understand the negative connotation of this pre-colonial warrior term, we should keep in mind that during the major period of anti-Tutsi polemic (1990–1994) that led to the genocide of 1994, the *RPF* had conducted two major attacks deep into Rwandan soil: one in October 1990 and one in February 1993. *RPF* troops were even installed in Kigali before the end of 1993 out of international pressure towards Habyarimana's regime for a transitional government of power sharing with *RPF*, and they were still there when the airplane of president Habyarimana was shot down. At the same time the political party of Habyarimana was arming and training its youth wing, the *interahamwe* who were growing stronger, with the result of increased number of political assassinations in Rwanda from both camps (the Hutu extremist camp and the opposition camp).

58. Prosecutor v. Bizimungu, Mugenzi, Bicomumpaka and Mugiraneza, *Trial Chamber II - Continued Trial*, ICTR-99-50-T, 22 November 2005, 72.

59. Ibid., 74.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., 76.

persons named in his speech, threatened with biblical misfortunes. Indeed, Ndasingwa, Nzamurambaho, and Ngurinzira (all mentioned in his speech) were assassinated on April 7, 1994. They faced the single most important accusation, namely that they were supporters of the *Inkotanyi* or that they themselves were *Inkotanyi*. A vast number of victims during the genocide were also facing the same accusation by all those hunting them down, tracking them, and massacring them in large numbers with the cruelest way. Therefore, on the one hand we have the supporters of Habyarimana, who were entrusted to God through their prayers, showing divine favor to their cause, and on the other hand the *Inkotanyi* and their supporters upon whom biblical woes were about to befall, citing the Bible because “the Bible was well known to Rwandans.”

Within this context, *Kangura*, the leading newspaper for disseminating racist hatred against the Tutsis, published in December 1990 the notorious “Hutu Ten Commandments.”⁶² These Commandments—obviously named after the Ten Commandments from the Bible (Exod 20:1–17; Deut 5:4–21)—were rules on what a Hutu must do, and defined a Hutu traitor. For example, the Hutu must stand firm and vigilant against their common enemy, the Tutsi, and they must spread the Hutu ideology wherever they go. Similarly, any Hutu is a traitor when he acquires a Tutsi wife or concubine, a secretary or a protégée, forms a business alliance with a Tutsi, invests his own funds or public funds in a Tutsi enterprise, borrows money from or loans money to a Tutsi, or grants favors to Tutsis. Furthermore, the “Hutu Ten Commandments” dictate that strategic positions such as politics, administration, economics, the military, and security must be restricted to the Hutu, the educational system (pupils, scholars, and teachers) must be dominated by the Hutu in majority, and the Rwandan army must be exclusively Hutu. The biblical Ten Commandments contain the ethical obligations of ancient Israelites within their own peculiar worldview. Similarly, the “Hutu Ten Commandments” are the Hutu version of the ethical obligation of Hutu Rwandans within their own worldview, divided between Hutus and Tutsis. But, the use of the title “Ten Commandments” is not coincidental. The Hutu authors of these commandments were presenting their own biblical version of a legal code for an ordered and exclusively Hutu society.

We can better understand the “Hutu Ten Commandments” by looking at the first version, as they appeared on September 27, 1959 in Ngoma, in southeastern Rwanda, at a meeting of the *APROSOMA*. Some of these were simpler and more straightforward, reminiscent of the biblical Ten

62. They were originally published in French on *Kangura* newspaper issue no. 6. For an English translation see McCullum, *The Angels*, appendix 2; Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 89.

Commandments, but purposefully modified to target the Tutsi. They are as follows: “Do not trust anyone, but count only on God and on yourself;” “Never trust or count on a Tutsi;” “Never commit adultery with Tutsi women or girls;” “Never tell lie like a Tutsi;” and “Do not steal like a Tutsi.” However, their message was not less gruesome: “his [e.g. Tutsi’s] greed is the scourge which exterminate us,” or “If you were avenging the evil he did to you, no Tutsi would survive in Rwanda.”⁶³

It comes as no surprise that the “The Hutu Ten Commandments” were published in a newspaper which served as an important political tool in a country where a large portion of the population was literate and where newspapers were circulated widely.⁶⁴ In January 1992, *Kangura* also published a prayer where the concept of unity between the three ethnic groups of Rwanda (i.e. the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa populations) was contested. In the prayer, the supposed unity was referred to as a detested unity, which cannot be applied on earth, unlike the Holy Trinity in the heavens.⁶⁵ This is an example similar to the speech of Mugesera at the end of the same year, as mentioned above, where the Hutu politician had openly explained that the message of the gospels had been changed in the Hutu Movement. Therefore, the Rwandan situation in 1992 could no longer reflect the Holy Trinity. The idea of Rwandan “Trinity” on earth needed to change in order to legitimize the extermination of one of its constituents, the Tutsi population. By evoking the divine model of the Holy Trinity as an example that cannot be applied to mundane Rwanda, this left room for interpreting its collapse (i.e. the extermination of its Tutsi population) as something which did not go against any Christian cosmic model (i.e. Trinity on earth = three populations in Rwanda).

A couple of months before, in November 1991, *Kangura* had also published an image of Grégoire Kayibanda, leader of the Hutu revolution and first President of Rwanda, next to a machete on its front page along with the

63. Prosecutor v. Bikindi, *Interoffice Memorandum*, ICTR-KT2-2001-72-T, 17 August 2006, Annex III.

64. Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 83–87. The most important work on the role of the media in the 1994 Rwanda genocide remains Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, where a short chapter entitled “Mobilization de la religion” was very useful for the present essay (Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 324–330). According to Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, the magazine *Kangura* was closely controlled by a small circle of the closest supporters and beneficiaries of the Habyarimana regime, and after October 1990, when RPF started the attacks against Rwanda from neighbouring Uganda, became all the more aggressive, with a public voice of hate that drove an even sharper line between Hutu and Tutsi (Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 24–28, 33–36, 38–42).

65. Cited in Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 325. The article was entitled “L’unité de la sainte-Trinité ne convient pas sur terre.”

sarcastic slogan: “The Tutsi are God’s nation” in the Kinyarwanda language (“Batutsi bwoko bw’imana”)



The main question of the cover page was as follows: “What Weapons Shall We Use to Conquer the Cockroaches Once and for All?”⁶⁶ The answer expected to this rhetorical question, and with the hindsight of history and years of scholarly research, can very well be “genocide,” “extermination,” “ethnic cleansing,” “hate propaganda,” “machetes,” and so forth; however, this paper sets out to expose another supplementary answer: the “weapon”

66. Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 114.

of religiously-sanctioned ideology. In yet another cover page, this time in January 1991, the Holy Family is depicted with an image of the Virgin Mary asking the infant Jesus to save the Hutus of Burundi from the massacre, while the standing figure of Joseph simultaneously asks Jesus to mobilize all Hutus of the world to unite.⁶⁷



Another extremist newspaper, *Umurava*, believed to be at the core of the Habyarimana regime, used more direct religious language. In mid-1991 it declared the God-given power of Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana:

67. Ibid., 373. Jolyon Mitchell in his book on the role of religion and media wrote concerning this particular newspaper cover that "[t]he headline unequivocally enlists God to the Hutu cause" (Mitchell, "Cultivating Violence," 82).

“it is God who has given to Habyarimana the power to govern the country; it is He who will show the way forward.”⁶⁸ However, the most effective propagandist instrument was the broadcasting of hate speeches on the radio, especially by the notorious government-funded *RTLM* which cried out for Hutu supremacy and disseminated racist messages against Tutsi. This popular Rwandan radio station began broadcasting in August 1993 its radical messages with many of its founding members from the political supporters of President Habyarimana (including members of his cabinet), as well as the vice-president of the *interahamwe*, and many of its journalists from the ranks of extremist political party *CDR*. It is not a coincidence that the New York-based NGO “Human Rights Watch” had recorded the distribution of radios to the people by the local authorities before the official beginnings of the genocide, in a country without a television network. At the same time, more than half of the houses in the cities had their own radio, often subsidized by the ruling party. The ratio in villages was much lower, but radios were also available in public places like restaurants or bars; people could also go to neighboring houses which had a radio.⁶⁹

On April 12, 1994—(five days after the official beginning of the genocide)—*RTLM* speaker Kantano Habimana announced in relation to the alleged *RPF* assassination of the Hutu president Habyarimana:

The Rwandan God is on our side, he is not far away and I believe he will continue to help us in our misfortune, our serious misfortune which has no parallel in the world. How can a minority, a small group of people assemble bandits to chase the authorities elected by the majority of the population out of power? That has never happened anywhere and I hope such will never happen to the Rwandans. The God of the Rwandans will save us from this. Stay tuned to free R.T.L.M. radio broadcasting from its station in Kigali.⁷⁰

68. See Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 46: “c’est Dieu qui a donné à Habyarimana le pouvoir de diriger le pays, c’est Lui qui indiquera la marche à suivre.” For *Umurava*’s extremist tone, see *ibid.*, 42–44. Among its founding members were the President of Rwanda himself, the director of the Rwandan Intelligence Office (*ORINFOR*), and the Seventh-Day Adventist priest Pascal Simbikangwa (*Ibid.*, 43).

69. Des Forges et al., *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*, 84–87; Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 63–74, 80–82, 139–306; Mitchell, “Cultivating Violence,” 78–79, 86–92; Chalk, “Hate Radio in Rwanda,” 95, 97–99. For a more recent and diverse analysis (e.g. on the effect of its rhetoric of ethnic hatred in rural Rwanda), see the many contributions by specialists like Alison Des Forges, Jean-Pierre Chrétien, Marcel Kabanda, and others in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*.

70. Prosecutor v. Nahimana, Barayagwiza and Ngeze, *Trial Chamber I - Prosecution Exhibit P103/4B*, ICTR-99-52-T, 2 July 2002.

RTLM never denounced brutal killings against the Tutsis; rather, it professed God's approval ("God is on our side") and aid for Hutu misfortunes ("God. . . will save us"). What these misfortunes are more specifically is left unexplained. But, from the historical context, we can easily understand that by this they meant the assassination of Habyarimana and the attack of the *RPF* in Rwanda. For Rwandan hardliners, and not just the *RTLM*, Rwanda was at war and not amidst genocide. In other words, the underlying message broadcast was that "the God of the Rwandans" is on their side in the war against the *RPF* and that God will save them from *RPF*'s efforts to take over the power from "the authorities elected by the majority of the population." The genocide—which was never named as such by *RTLM*—already in place by Hutu killers (representing the "majority") against the Tutsi (the "minority"), was presented as something that did not go against the plan of "the God of the Rwandans" in continuing to help the Hutu in these hours of perceived "misfortune." It is equivalent to saying that the "God of the Rwandans" was not going to save the Tutsi; he was not on their side or near them.

Ten days later, on April 22, 1994, Kantano Habimana once again appeals to the God of the Rwandans along the same lines:

Rwanda's God is never far, is never far; I have a feeling He will continue helping us in this crisis, the terrible crisis we are in, which has never been witnessed anywhere in world history imagine a minority. . . a small group mobilizing here and there some people, including bandits and all, and coming to take over power from leaders representing the people who make up the majority of the population. This has never happened anywhere and I believe it will not succeed in Rwanda; Rwanda's God will ensure victory against it.⁷¹

It seems clear that by claiming Rwanda's God to give the victory to the Hutu, the Hutu are elected by their God to rule Rwanda. In the extremist minds, the full-fledged genocide that was taking place in order to eliminate the Tutsi could be seen as part of God's plan to ensure this victory. On an *RTLM* broadcast May 28, 1994, radio speaker Kantano Habimana used the biblical story of Solomon (1 Kgs 3:16–28) to prove that *RPF* did not really care about Rwanda. According to Habimana, since 1959, the exiled Tutsi have been acting like the false mother in the biblical story of the Judgment of Solomon where the king ruled between two women, both claiming to be the mother of a child. *RPF* prefers, much like the false mother, to destroy

71. Prosecutor v. Nahimana, Barayagwiza and Ngeze, *Trial Chamber I - Prosecution Exhibit P103/205B*, ICTR-99-52-T, 4 June 2003.

the cities of Rwanda than to hand them over to their real mother/owner: the Hutu population.⁷² This broadcast oversees the fact that at that point (end of May 1994) a state-organized, group-perpetrated, and time-efficient killing of fellow Rwandans for their Tutsi origin or for being moderate Hutu had already taken place for the most part, which cannot be easily explained from this peculiar Hutu reading of Solomon's Judgment story. A claim against a perceived enemy (exiled-Tutsi-led *RPF*) is dressed with distorted biblical garment by the extremist-Hutu-run radio in order to justify their genocidal policy of the outmost cruelty which was aimed at eliminating the entire enemy (all Tutsi in Rwanda without exception) before the latter would have been able to carry away their assumed plan of taking Rwanda away from its real owners (the majority Hutu population).

RTLM speaker Valérie Bemeriki even broadcast on June 10, 1994—when most of the horrendous massacres of thousands of Tutsi, especially inside Christian Churches, had already taken place—that the Pope of Rome had declared that “Rwanda was a country of martyrs.”⁷³ During that broadcast, the *RTLM* speaker made sure to name only the three Hutu bishops (“God's chosen people”) that had been killed by *RPF*. In other words, any Hutu priest, chosen by God, who was killed by the *RPF*, was a martyr. However, the larger number of Tutsi priests and pastors massacred in the genocide were presented as being left outside the Pope's worries. *RTLM* was trying to convince its audience that the death of a Hutu was clearly not the same as the death of a Tutsi.

On June 13, 1994, *RTLM* speaker Kantano Habimana proclaimed that the final victory of the Hutu was the end destination of the history of Rwanda. He declared that:

. . . MRND has given [i.e. offered] its supreme militant, as God has offered his son Jesus who died on the cross for the salvation of all sinners, all humans. The Major-General [i.e. Juvenal Habyarimana] died on the 6th of April at 20:30 in the evening, and his blood has saved all Rwandans who were condemned to death and to be killed by the *Inkotanyi* after this operation to seize power. So the MRND accepted to sacrifice this man who was a prominent militant of the MRND, in order that his blood may save a large number of Rwandans who were to perish with the seizure of power by the *Inkotanyi*.⁷⁴

72. As cited in Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 325–326.

73. Prosecutor v. Nahimana, Barayagwiza and Ngeze, *Trial Chamber I - Prosecution Exhibit P103/84B*, ICTR-99-52-T, 4 June 2003.

74. For the French text, see Agostini, *La pensée politique*, 108: “le MRND a donné son militant suprême, comme Dieu a donné en offrande son fils Jésus qui est mort sur

Perhaps what strikes modern audiences the most is this ability of the Hutu propaganda machine to completely ignore the killings taking place during the genocide and to present its heroic deceased leader as a “new Jesus” who had shed his blood to save his fellow Rwandans from a failed *coup d'état* by the rebels (the “Inkotanyi”), the illegitimate fighters of *RPF*. If this *coup d'état* were to succeed, “a large number of Rwandans” would have been doomed to perish. Their assassinated Major-General (and President of Rwandan Republic at that time), like God’s son, saved them with the blood he shed in his airplane crash, like Jesus’s blood on the cross. The interesting thing is that it is the Hutu-party *MRND* that offered its “new Jesus” to save Rwanda and that the enemy, whose plans were to seize power and kill “all Rwandans” or “a large number of Rwandans,” is the Tutsi-led *RPF*. Salvation, therefore, is seen through the dichotomy of Hutu and Tutsi (despite the fact that the use of the word “Rwandans” tries to disguise this nuance). In other words, all those Rwandans, “condemned to death and to be killed by the *Inkotanyi*,” must be the Hutu, but their own Hutu savior rescued them. These *RTLM* broadcasts were in perfect alliance with the Interim President Sindikubwabo, who reassured his audience via his speeches that God would help them fight their enemy. On July 2, 1994, at a time when the so-called “1994 Rwanda genocide” had claimed almost all of its victims, *RTLM* announced:

Let us sing: “Come, let us rejoice: the *Inkotanyi* have been exterminated! Come dear friends, let us rejoice, the Good Lord is just!”

The Good Lord really is just, these evildoers, these terrorists, these people with suicidal tendencies will end up being exterminated. When I remember the number of corpses that I saw lying around in Nyamirambo yesterday alone. . .”⁷⁵

The bodies that the *RTLM* speaker has seen were almost certainly unarmed, innocent massacred Tutsi, and perhaps some *RPF* soldiers. However, if the *RTLM* joyfully claims that the good Lord is just, this means that this God is in full accordance with the extermination of the Tutsi population as an action divinely sanctioned.

la croix pour le salut de tous les pécheurs, de tous les hommes. Le général-major est mort le 6 avril, à 20h30 du soir, et son sang a sauvé tous les Rwandais qui étaient voués à la mort et qui devaient être tués par les inkotanyi après cette opération de prise de pouvoir. Cet homme donc qui était un éminent militant du MRND, le MRND a accepté de le sacrifier pour que son sang sauve un grand nombre de Rwandais qui devaient périr avec la prise du pouvoir par les inkotanyi.”

75. Prosecutor v. Nahimana, Barayagwiza and Ngeze, *Trial Chamber I - Prosecution Exhibit P103/40D*, ICTR-99-52-T, 1 July 2002.

The victorious tone of the extermination of Tutsi with direct religious overtones was also manifested in the popular Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary at Kibeho, a hill near the center of Rwanda, which became famous for a series of miraculous apparitions of the Virgin Mary during the 1980s. Local visionaries attracted many followers and pilgrims since the first such vision in April 1982. It attracted the attention of the Bishop of Kigali, Monsignor Vincent Nsengiyumva, member of the central committee of the Hutu extremist party *MRND*, and Madame Agathe Habyarimana, wife of President Habyarima. The connection between the presidential family and the cult of the Virgin Mary at Kibeho was so strong that some called it “Our Lady of the Second Republic.”⁷⁶ The apparitions were covered at length by the national radio and the government-controlled daily newspaper *Imwaho* published articles about these apparitions. Some of these visionaries were reporting that Rwanda would soon be bathed in blood. This corroborates with a document found in President Habyarimana’s house concerning the prophecy of a Catholic visionary, known as Little Pebbles, who had predicted in 1987 that Jesus Christ would return on earth on Easter Sunday 1992 following a series of great catastrophes. A member of the commission on Kibeho, Bishop of Gikongoro, Monsignor Augustin Misago, had revealed to journalist Philip Gourevitch that there were visions of the Virgin Mary crying for the people killing with machetes, and for the hills which were covered with corpses.⁷⁷ The last apparition of the Virgin Mary at Kibeho was recorded on May 15, 1994, in the midst of the genocide, by the visionary Valentine Nyiramukiza. The event was reported by witnesses and broadcast by *RTL*M, according to which the Virgin Mary was reassuring that President Habyarimana was with her in heaven. Her words, according to the investigation of Gourevitch, “were widely interpreted as an expression of divine support for the genocide.”⁷⁸ Indeed, *RTL*M broadcast that the Virgin

76. Juvénal Habyarimana had inaugurated the Second Republic after his successful seizure of power on July 5, 1973, against President Grégoire Kayibanda (who had inaugurated the First Republic), leading a totalitarian regime and ousting Kayibanda’s ruling *PARMEHUTU* party.

77. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform*, 79, 137. Augustin Misago is often described as a Hutu power sympathizer who refused refuge to Tutsis, criticized moderate Hutus for helping the “cockroaches,” and informed a Vatican emissary in Rwanda that the Rwandan people did not want Tutsi priests anymore. See also Saur, “From Kibeho to Medjugorje,” 211–215, where he provides comparative material for various Marian apparitions, including those of the Virgin Mary at Kibeho, and how they have been used by totalitarian regimes for their own end at various periods in time (e.g. in Portugal, in Croatia, and in Rwanda). For more details, especially on earlier apparitions, see Getrey, *Kibeho*.

78. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform*, 137; Saur, “From Kibeho to Medjugorje,” 215.

Mary was appearing from time to time at the Kibeho church declaring, “we will have the victory.”⁷⁹

Moving to witness accounts of Tutsi, who managed to escape the genocide or of Hutu *génocidaire*, more or less a similar picture emerges. A Tutsi woman named Théophile Zigirumugabe, who was interviewed in Kigali on June 29, 1995, by the London-based NGO “African Rights,” and who survived the massacres at Kibeho, remembers an incident implicating female college students. One student of economics and two of biochemistry annoyed by the cries of a baby Tutsi which was saved a few days earlier from the notorious killings at the Kibeho church and brought to the girls’ dormitory of the nearby College, had made sure that the baby was slaughtered and thrown into the toilet, while they were dancing around and saying that “God had sent all the Tutsis to their deaths.”⁸⁰ “You must be eliminated. God no longer wants you” is the answer that Tutsi refugees received by the district president of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Mungonero when Tutsi pastors wrote to inform him that they were about to be killed. He refused to intervene for their rescue and, as a result, almost two thousand Tutsis were slaughtered on April 16, 1994.⁸¹

Convicted Hutu *génocidaire* Élie reveals a very interesting aspect of the power of Hutu-run and government-sponsored radio stations in general:

On Sunday mornings the radio programs no longer broadcast masses as before. But encouraging hearsay came from well-known Monsignors who arrived from Kingali. Sometimes we heard hymns and services on the radio. Those were tapes without sermons, but the religious music soothed people who felt uneasy. It reminded them of ordinary Sundays – it did them some good.⁸²

79. Chrétien et al., *Les medias*, 327–330.

80. African Rights, *Rwanda, not so Innocent*, 69. This collection of accounts is remarkably original since it attempts to expose the role of women *génocidaire* during the 1994 Rwanda genocide, an issue as neglected as the systematic, genocidal rape cases against women Tutsi.

81. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform*, 25–30, 42; Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gerard Ntakirutimana, *Trial Chamber I - Judgement and Sentence*, ICTR-96–10-T and ICTR-96–17-T, 21 February 2003, par. 487.

82. Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, 137. This is one of the rare and certainly most controversial books, which contains testimonial texts from the killers. Some scholars have praised it, while others have attacked it. Among the former are Worms, “Les individus témoins,” and Mouchard, “Absence et retour du tiers.” To the latter belongs Hron, “Gukora and Itsembatsemba.” Very interesting critical accounts can also be found in Kuhn-Kennedy, “À voix haute ou silencieuse,” and Spiessens, “Le génocidaire parle.” No doubt, this collection of testimonies is extremely valuable for historians.

Evidently, the hymns and services were not only reminding people of ordinary Sundays with broadcast masses as before, but also making them feel that God is with them or “not far”, as it is recorded also in the evidence already quoted in this essay. Of course, that means that at that point God was not with the Tutsi. This is what Adalbert, a former *interahamwe* boss in Kibungo, felt when after the crash of president Habyarimana’s plane, the Tutsi who were normally participating with Hutu in Sunday mass singing hymns in the choir did not show up at the appointed hour for mass:

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 outside the church door. We left the Lord and our prayers inside to rush home. We changed from our Sunday best into our workaday clothes, we grabbed clubs and machetes, we went straight off to killing.⁸³

About the Tutsi, who were hidden in the papyrus waiting to be massacred by the machetes of the Hutu killers while still praying and psalming, Élie recounts, how he and other killers were laughing “at their *Amens*,” joking about the paradise awaiting Tutsi.⁸⁴ He believes that God has turned his back on the Hutu killings and asks:

Did He watch what was happening in the marshes? Why did He not stab our murderous eyes with His wrath? Or show some small sign of disapproval to save more lucky ones? In those horrible moments, who could hear His silence? We were abandoned by all words of rebuke.⁸⁵

This clearly indicates that in the mind of this *génocidaire* the lack of rebuke (ecclesiastical or political) was a sign that the genocidal actions could be interpreted as enjoying God’s approval. Here, we see the results of the Hutu propaganda disseminated before and during the genocide.

Similarly, Joseph-Désiré, a former teacher, waiting in prison for his capital punishment for crimes he had committed during the genocide, explains: “I did not choose this, it was God.”⁸⁶ From his perspective, it is “God alone who can see it, watch over it, and guide it.”⁸⁷ For him God “is the only one who could stop a genocide.”⁸⁸ This is a very dangerous logic into which

83. Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, 132.

84. *Ibid.*, 135.

85. *Ibid.*, 137.

86. *Ibid.*, 136.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*

young Hutu killers were purposefully left to fall; had God not wanted the genocide, he would have certainly stopped it. In other words, a genocide unfolding under his assumingly all-seeing capability, without hindrance, leaves *génocidaire* Hutu believers room for only one explanation: God's approval. Another Hutu convicted *génocidaire* Léopold makes a stunning revelation:

We no longer considered the Tutsis as humans or even as creatures of God. We had stopped seeing the world as it is, I mean as an expression of God's will. That is why it was easy for us to wipe them out.⁸⁹

According to Léopold, there was no problem for the killers to pray for themselves or for their crimes "to be a bit forgotten, or to get just a little forgiveness" and then to return to the marshes in the morning.⁹⁰ Following his logic, Tutsi were not God's creatures; therefore, God would not care less for them. They were beyond God's creation plans; therefore God would not intervene to save them. Even if the world was not seen any more as "an expression of God's will," for Léopold, his actions in no way were *against* God's will.

Emmanuel Murangira—a thirty-six year old at the time of the genocide who lost forty-three members of his family, in addition to all five of his children and his wife—recounts that after a meeting between the sector councilors and the *bourgmestre* in the commune of Nyamagabe, the Hutu officials went to the market of Nyarusiza to tell the Hutu population: "Go and destroy the houses of the Tutsis! Kill them! God has abandoned them!"⁹¹ He remembers the time when he was staying outside in the open air in front of the church of Gikongoro, specifically on April 11, 1994, during the first attack of the Hutu killers blowing their whistles and chanting: "The God of Tutsis is no longer around," and "There is only the God of

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Totten and Ubaldo, *We Cannot Forget*, 81. The remarkable aspect of this book is that it contains in-depth interviews with a wide range of survivors of the 1994 Rwanda genocide from different parts of the country, with detailed stories from before, during, and after the genocide, unlike previously accessible books with short interviews or experts interviewed (See Totten and Ubaldo, *We Cannot Forget*, 8–13). Key issues that emerge from this collection of accounts, according to the editors, are the discrimination against Tutsi, an ever-increasing violence prior to 1994, the current government's efforts to meet survivors' needs, the loneliness of survivors, an ongoing psychological suffering, a heavy burden for widows, children, and orphans, an ongoing fear for their lives, the international community's response, and so on. The editors, however, did not see the need of a specific focus on religion. (See Totten and Ubaldo, *We Cannot Forget*, 13–21).

Hutus remaining.”⁹² Emmanuel Muhinda, another Tutsi survivor, who was nine years old at the time of the genocide and who lost nine family members, recalls from the notorious massacre in the Ntarama church hearing the attackers singing continuously during the manslaughter, singing to God with Christian songs.⁹³ These examples reveal the general climate amongst Hutu killers; their actions were not against their religious beliefs since songs dedicated to their God could accompany them. There was this idea that God was on their side, while their enemy was deprived of God’s protection. Paraphrasing Timothy Longman, Hutu killers were acting with this mindset (where they slaughtered and at the same time sang and praised their God), because the nature of Christianity in Rwanda was “a politicized, conservative, discriminatory faith.”⁹⁴

Overall, in a country such as Rwanda, where Christianity is the predominant religion, there is a strong feeling that we are often dealing with two different gods: the god of Hutus and the god of Tutsis. In his trial, Alphonse Nteziryayo, *préfet* of Butare in southern Rwanda who served in this position from June 1994 until he fled the country in July 1994, was accused of urging the Hutu population to kill Tutsi (even their young children) during a meeting on May 24, 1994. He is reported to have claimed that those Tutsi women who were legally married to a Hutu prior to the “war” (a not so uncommon way of referring to the genocide by participants) had to be spared, adding that they were praying to the Hutu god and not to the Tutsi god.⁹⁵ That people saw or believed in two distinct gods in Rwanda during the genocide, one for Hutu and one for Tutsi, can also be seen in a testimony of Tutsi women, victims of rape by soldiers, who reported what the perpetrators said to them:

The God of the Tutsis has abandoned or forsaken you. I don’t know how you are still alive and what are you doing here. You Tutsi women are not dying like the men because you have something to offer men.⁹⁶

92. Ibid., 85.

93. Ibid., 119.

94. Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 197.

95. Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko, Ntahobali, Nsabimana, Nteziryayo, Kanyabashi and Ndayambaje, *Trial Chamber II – Continued Trial*, ICTR-98-42-T, 8 March 2007, 48; Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko, Ntahobali, Nsabimana, Nteziryayo, Kanyabashi and Ndayambaje, *Trial Chamber II – Judgement and Sentence*, ICTR-98-42-T, 24 June 2011, par. 3587.

96. Bizimungu v. Prosecutor, *Appeals Chamber – Prosecution’s Additional Submissions*, ICTR-00-56B-A, 7 March 2014, par. 58. This testimony was heard at the case of Augustin Bizimungu, general in the *Rwandan Armed Forces* who briefly served as

Similarly, protected witness FAX testified on the trial *Persecutor v. Idelphonse Nizeyimana*,⁹⁷ that the soldiers were very young and “very, very severe, very, very harsh, insulting people, telling us that even God had cursed Tutsis.”⁹⁸

Scarce Resources in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide

In the report of London-based NGO “African Rights” published as early as May 1994, entitled *Rwanda: Who Is Killing; Who is Dying; What Is to Be Done*, there is a small chapter called “Competition for Scarce Resources,” which states:

One of the issues most successfully manipulated by Hutu extremists was the issue of land. The extremists told peasants that the RPF was coming back to take their land, using this issue to generate fear and hostility. At the same time they also promised the land occupied by Tutsis in order to provide incentives for killing Tutsis.⁹⁹

What if we apply this approach to religious promises? What will be the effect upon Hutu people listening that “God of the Rwandans is with us,” or that “God is not far,” or that “God has abandoned Tutsi”? What God thinks and believes in terms of the Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy and antagonism is completely “created” as a non-empirical scarce resource, privileging only one of the two groups which accords itself the right to exclusively interpret God’s will. There is no way that any Tutsi or Hutu can disprove that this “non-verifiable religious good” was ever attributed by God to Hutu and that Hutu are self-deceived or manipulated. With no empirical grounding for claims such as “God will assist us,” “God will hear our prayers,” “God is by our side,” “God guides us,” or “God watches over us,” Christianity in the mouths and minds of lay Rwandan Christians creates a powerful type of scarce resource which can be so powerful that it turns an action of outmost cruelty and the almost unimaginable savagery any human being can

chief of staff of the army during the genocide, and was accused of training soldiers and militiamen who carried out the genocide. He was sentenced to thirty years in prison by the *ICTR* affirmed on appeal.

97. The accused was second-in-command and in charge of the intelligence and military operations during the genocide. He was convicted by the *ICTR* for 35 years imprisonment affirmed on appeal.

98. *Prosecutor v. Nizeyimana, Trials Chamber III - Prosecution’s Closing Brief*, *ICTR-00-55C-T*, 9 November 2011, par. 212.

99. Omaar and de Waal, *Who Is Killing*, 27–28.

commit into an acceptable action, not to say a God-sanctioned action. We have even seen, throughout this essay, how God was perceived as promising the victory to the *génocidaire*. Their life is supposed to be guided by the “Hutu Ten Commandments.”

No matter how abominable these claims made by Hutu killers may be, it leads to an approach that appeared in the bibliography of the study of religions in 2005, presented for the first time by Hector Avalos in his book *Fighting Words*. Avalos argues that not only monotheistic religions, but religions in general, create scarce resources: “. . .most violence is due to scarce resources, real or perceived. Whenever people perceive that there is not enough of something they value, conflict may ensue to maintain or acquire that resource.”¹⁰⁰ In his understanding of this issue, Avalos includes conflicts of domestic, group, national, international, and global scale over subterranean, terracentric, astrocentric, as well as transcendent resources.¹⁰¹ Religions produce transcendent resources, which, according to Avalos, unlike many non-religious resources, are “wholly manufactured by, or reliant on, unverifiable premises.”¹⁰² To prove his theory, Avalos used examples where religious motives were used to “incite or maintain violence.”¹⁰³ I believe that the cases brought up in this essay refer to the use of religious motives with exactly this goal.

Avalos argues that scarcity, which is an important factor of violence, is a major component of religion.¹⁰⁴ We can talk about scarcity in the cases brought up in this paper because none of the people who employed Christian vocabulary during the 1994 Rwanda genocide made the approval of God for their actions immediately available to all Rwandans. In other words, the killers thought they were under God’s favor, while God abandoned their victims. Sometimes, they went so far as to claim that their enemies had a different God (although their enemies claimed to be Christians just like their killers) and that this God had abandoned them during the genocide. Mass killings were often aimed at depriving Tutsi victims from feeling that they had access to God’s approval to survive, or to God’s promise of liberation.

Since Hector Avalos’s goal was to explain how religions can sometimes generate violence, the examples provided in this paper come from a specific historical event (genocide can never be a “case study”¹⁰⁵) that is the cul-

100. Avalos, *Fighting Words*, 18.

101. *Ibid.*, 96–99.

102. *Ibid.*, 18.

103. *Ibid.*, 23.

104. *Ibid.*, 93.

105. The heroic Philippe Gaillard, head of the International Committee of the Red

mination of whatever humans perceive as violent: psychological, mental, sexual, verbal, and physical violence at the same time, in extreme quantities and monstrous quality, and targeted towards a specific group, perceived as such by genocide perpetrators. Avalos does acknowledge that political and economic factors can also lead to violence,¹⁰⁶ and the 1994 Rwanda genocide admittedly also had strong political and economic factors that turned ordinary men into violent killers.¹⁰⁷ However, I deliberately chose a historical event, which is not transparent in its form of violence. Political, economic, and religious factors created their own scarce resources and blended them together for decades in Rwanda. It is not the place here to discuss how genocide occurs, since it is one of the most complicated phenomena in human history, but one thing is clear: *the 1994 Rwanda genocide was religiously violent*. And not only violent because of the complicity of the Churches, but also because politicians, journalists, church leaders, killers, perpetrators, and even victims manufactured their own transcendent scarce resources made of Christian motifs for good or for ill.

In conclusion, the evidence available for studying the 1994 Rwanda genocide demonstrates that Avalos's theory is in need of some expansion. His arguments are often text-based and overemphasize examples about how people read and interpret their sacred books or how they act according to what they think is the right interpretation of said writings. Text interpretation can make one group feel like they are more privileged than another, but the words and deeds of the actors and participants of the 1994 Rwanda genocide reveal that the ways in which people read and understand sacred writings can be quite irrelevant in certain cases. The use of biblical motifs, as well as religious motifs in general, in the way that a religion is experienced in everyday life, even during a genocide, has much less to do with sacred books and their systematic interpretation than with their vague invocation or with general claims tentatively based on a shared religious background

Cross in Rwanda, who did not abandon Rwanda during the genocide and managed to save tens of thousands of lives wrote: "I still have some kind of debt, or rather duty, towards all those who died in Rwanda in 1994, who were given so little attention later that some people think that the Rwandan genocide can be considered as a 'case study.' For those who died, and especially for those who survived, the Rwandan genocide is certainly not, and never will be, a 'case study.'" See Gaillard, "Memory Never Forgets Miracles," 111.

106. Avalos, *Fighting Words*, 21.

107. Two important works can be outlined here for their significant field-work and outstanding quality of research: that of Scott Strauss (Strauss, *The Order of Genocide*) and that of Lee Ann Fujii (Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*). Although both are trying to answer the thorny question concerning why ordinary people committed genocide in Rwanda, none of them makes any single mention of religious factors.

that people should have in a certain culture at a given time and place. Real people create or choose to sustain a religion within their specific historical environment and in as much as these real people are to be blamed for violent episodes in the course of their history, whatever ideology they produce, uphold, and follow, including religious beliefs, is to be blamed as well.

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