Towards a spirituality of reconciliation with special reference to the Lendu and Hema people in the diocese of Bunia (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Alfred Ndrabu Buju

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Towards A Spirituality of Reconciliation
with Special Reference to The Lendu &
Hema People in The Diocese of Bunia/DRC
TOWARDS A SPIRITUALITY OF RECONCILIATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE LENDU AND HEMA PEOPLE IN THE DIOCESE OF BUNIA / DRC

A Thesis Submitted to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Licentiate Degree in Spiritual Theology

By

Rev. Fr. Ndhabu Buju Alfred

May 2002

Nairobi-Kenya
DECLARATION

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

Thesis Title:
TOWARDS A SPIRITUALITY OF RECONCILIATION
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LENDU AND HEMA PEOPLE IN THE DIOCESE
OF BUNIA/DRC

By
Rev. Fr. Ndrabu Buju Alfred

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has never been submitted to any College or University for academic credit. All the sources consulted are fully acknowledged.

Signature: .................................................................

Date: 03 June 2002 .................................................................

This thesis has been submitted with the approval of:

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Rev. Dr. Gachungu Francis

Date: .................................................................

Second Supervisor: .................................................................

Rev. Dr. Ngona Dieudonné

Date: .................................................................
To my late mother and all the victims of the Lendu-Hema conflict.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank God for his constant love to me and especially for inspiring me to undertake a scientific reflection on a burning issue concerning the spirituality of reconciliation with special reference to the Lendu-Hema conflict.

I wish to express my whole-hearted gratitude to the Right Reverend Leonard Dhejju, the former bishop of the Diocese of Bunia in the northeastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. He sent the author for further studies so as to allow him to reflect deeply on the spiritual dimension of the Christian life. His fatherly concern, financial and spiritual supports have been encouraging and have made it possible to bring this work to completion. He has personally been working very hard to bring peace in the region. May he find in this work the appreciation of his efforts and a contribution towards reconciliation among the Lendu and Hema peoples.

Many thanks also for my supervisors, Reverend Dr. Francis Gachunga and Reverend Dr. Dieudonné Ngona for their kind and resourceful guidance in this Thesis. Each of them really helped me to sharpen the ideas expressed in this study. Their encouragement and support were very constructive for further research.

Also I extend my appreciation to the administrative and teaching staff of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa for their service greatly helped me in the ongoing formation. May they find here a sign of my gratitude.

A great note of thanks goes to all the Christian faithful in the diocese of Bunia for their fraternal encouragement and support during the difficulties and tests undergone with the conflictual situation in the Diocese. A particular appreciation is due to those among
them who were interviewed and answered to the questionnaire given to them. Their availability to give relevant information to the author is very much appreciated.

I am very grateful to Mrs. Elizabeth Raymond of SIL and Sr. Elizabeth McAvenue of the Consolata Sisters, who proofread this thesis. Their generosity, self-sacrifice and readiness to help can never be forgotten.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. Abbreviation from the biblical references

(a) The Old testament

Ex    Exodus
Gn    Genesis
Jg    Judges
Lev   Leviticus
Sam   Samuel

(b) The New Testament

Acts  Acts of Apostles
Cor   Corinthians
Eph   Ephesians
Mt    Matthew

2. Miscellaneous abbreviations

ACL   Association Culturelle Lori
a.i   ad interim
AMECEA Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
BA    Bachelor of Arts
CECA  Communauté Evangélique au Centre de l’Afrique
Cf    Confer
CHIEA Catholic High Institute of Eastern Africa
CUEA  The Catholic University of Eastern Africa
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Expanded Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECZ</td>
<td>Eglise du Christ au Zaïre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.</td>
<td>Editor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eds</td>
<td>Editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ft</td>
<td>Following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLC</td>
<td>Front de Libération du Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibid.</td>
<td>Ibidem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRS</td>
<td>Institut de Recherches Scientifiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td>Members of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mgr</td>
<td>Monseigneur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLC/LMC</td>
<td>Mouvement de Libération du Congo // Liberation Movement of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>New testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLW/WLP</td>
<td>Parti de Libération des Walendu//Walendu Liberation Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCD/ML/CRD</td>
<td>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie/ Mouvement de Libération//Congo lese Rally for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev.</td>
<td>Reverend</td>
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1. Purpose of the Thesis

The aim of this study is to search for ways of overcoming ethnocentrism and particularism and to promote mutual tolerance and reconciliation. We want to plumb the cultural depths of Lendu and Hema peoples of Bunia, to discover what can appeal to reconciliation and also to combine this cultural idea of reconciliation with Christian reconciliation and forgiveness.

0.2. Rationale of the Thesis

Since April 1999, there has been in the Diocese of Bunia a cycle of violence involving two ethnic communities: the Lendu and the Hema. Through this violence, human life and property have been destroyed. As a consequence, relationships have broken down despite people belonging to the local church, and ecclesial life has been seriously affected.

If we wish to undertake the study of a spirituality of reconciliation, it is also because Mgr. Dheju Leonard, when he was the ordinary of the Diocese of Bunia, exhorted the faithful several times in his homilies and pastoral letters, inviting the parties in conflict to conversion, peace and reconciliation. In line with this, our thesis aims at studying and researching a spirituality of reconciliation.

[Page 1]
0.3. Central Question of Investigation

The questions at the centre of our investigation are formulated as follows:

How deep is the conflict between the Lendu and Hema peoples in light of the fact that we know such conflicts have occurred also in the past? What has failed in past attempts at reconciliation that such have not lasted? Is there any possibility of finding a better path to reconciliation?

0.4. Working Hypothesis

We have a working hypothesis. We believe that the previous attempts at reconciliation were not genuine. The historical, social and economic life-style of the two communities might be one of the causes of the conflict. Reconciliation attempts in the past appeared not to have touched the root causes of the conflict. Apart from the historical, social and economic factors, actual violence is also due to political manipulation.

0.5. Methodological Considerations

The methodology will be one that is commonly used in the Department of Spiritual Theology, namely, the foundational, dialogical and integrational method from a formative perspective.

In the foundational aspect, the research will put forward a formational element of human experience from a lived formative aspect. In our case, this experience is the
Lendu–Hema conflict. The research will then proceed to disclose, identify and elucidate the formative foundational structures, dimensions and dynamics that are universal and may be experienced by others in a similar formation situation.

In the dialogical aspect, the universal statements thus far disclosed (foundational, basic human experience) will be engaged in dialogue with the theories and experiences of other authors, novelists, interviewees etc. The purpose here will be to validate intersubjectively the foundational elements of the human experience of reconciliation as well as to verify them scientifically.

In the integrational aspect, all the findings and insights disclosed will be integrated into a new body of knowledge, which will then be applied to our case-study in order to test the probability, foundationality, and applicability of these findings and insights.

Throughout the foundational, dialogical and integrational method, the formational or the formative perspective is essential together with the assumption that the human person has a spiritual dimension, and that any genuine human formation is a spiritual one, guided and inspired by the deepest human entity, the spirit.

0.6. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis has four chapters. The first chapter is entitled: Reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema peoples in the Diocese of Bunia. The second chapter has not title: The Foundational Human Experience of Reconciliation. The third chapter deals with: the
Revelational and Post-revelational Dimensions of Reconciliation. The fourth chapter bears the title: Towards a more formative approach to a spirituality of reconciliation among African Christians.

0.7. Difficulties

First of all, because of our belonging to one of the ethnic communities in conflict, some people, both Lendu and Hema, were very suspicious vis-à-vis my field research. Secondly, with our being one of the victims in the cycle of violence, we have done our best to overcome the risk of falling into subjectivity. And thirdly, the details of the tragedy are still fresh in people’s memories, people are frustrated and are moved by the feeling of revenge. Worse, the violence is still going on.

In such conditions, is agreed that this research on reconciliation is based on a strong belief that reconciliation is initially and ultimately God’s work. Through our baptism, we have been reconciled with him at the high cost of the suffering, death and resurrection of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Although it may appear foolish, humanly speaking, to undertake such a study on reconciliation, we are taking it as our participation in God’s work of reconciliation and as our act of obedience to the mission of being an ambassador of reconciliation. Thus, despite the difficulties mentioned above, we have decided to face them and to challenge them as part of our prophetic role.
CHAPTER ONE

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE LENDU AND HEMA PEOPLES IN THE DIOCESE OF BUNIA

1.0. Introduction

This chapter will have four areas: an overview of the Diocese of Bunia, the broken relationship between the Lendu and Hema, the restoration of that relationship as a step towards reconciliation, and finally an integrating reflection.

1.1. Overview of the Diocese of Bunia

We will look at the geographical situation of the diocese, the Lendu people, and the Hema people.

1.1.1. Geographical Situation

The Diocese of Bunia is located in the Ecclesiastical Province of Kisangani, which is one of the six Congolese Ecclesiastical Provinces. It is bordered in the East by Lake Albert, in the North by Mahagi-Nioka and Isiro-Niangara Dioceses, in the West by Wamba Diocese and in the South by Beni-Butembo Diocese. With its surface area of 22,420 square kilometers, it is one of the smallest Dioceses in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is
subdivided into twelve parishes, which are distributed into three entities: the Northern deanery, the Southern deanery, and Western deanery.

Bunia is found in the Oriental Province, in Ituri District, which is subdivided into five territories: Mambasa, Irumu, Djugu, Mahagi and Aru. Situated in Ituri District, the Diocese of Bunia covers the Djugu and Irumu Territories. There are various people or groups living in the Diocese of Bunia. These are: Bira, Nyali, Lese, Mambisa, Mabendi, Ndo-Okebo, Pygmies, Lendu and Hema. We intend to focus our presentation on the last two groups.

1.1.2. Lendu People, Bbale or Walendu

First of all, as mentioned in the title, there are three appellations for the same people, namely Walendu, Bbale and Lendu. If the first one is strictly used as noun, the two others are both nouns and adjectives. Because of the various sources using three of them, we will adopt all of them throughout the thesis so as not to prove unfaithful to our sources. Nevertheless, for the sake of consistency, we will adopt the spelling Bbale instead of Bale. Also, we will use Lendu strictly as an adjective, while Bbale will be used interchangeably as adjective or noun according to the context.

To understand the identity of the Bbale people, one would have to ask the questions: Who are they? Where do they come from? Moreover, where are they located in the district of

---

2 With the rebellion led by the RCD/ML and the MLC, the Ituri District has become a Province.
3 Cf. Appendix III, Map No 1.
Ituri? It is still not easy to identify the Walendu because there are various points of view on the matter. As confirmation of this, a well-known ethnologist of Ituri writes about the Walendu: “Their language, their isolation, their difficult interaction with other groups complicate the oft-discussed problem of their origin”.

Besides the discussion about their origin, the most important thing is to know that nowadays they are considered on linguistic grounds as belonging rather to a Sudanic group. Samba supports the idea. He writes that the majority of the authors currently seem to attach much more importance to linguistic factors, which connect Bbale with Madi, Logo, and other tribes of Sudanic origin.

According to Pilo Guna, the Lendu people are subdivided into three clans: the Rutsi, the Tsiritsi, and the Bindi. The Rutsi and Tsiritsi are constituted of Lendu Pitsi, Lendu Tatsi, Lendu Djatsi and Mabendi. Each of them is grouped in an administrative entity called “collectivité”. The Lendu ethnic groups are found respectively in the North, the Centre, the South and the West of Djugu Territory while the Lendu Bindi are in Irumu Territory.

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5 Cf. Kaputo, 37.
6 Pilo Guna, «Historical View of the Conflictual Situation within the Local Church of Blukwa-Mbi from the Origin to 1989» (B. A. Project, Higher Institute of Theology, Bunia, 1990), 8.
7 In Mahagi territory we have a group of the Lendu people who are called Walendu Watsi.
8 Guna, 8.
1.1.3. Hema People, Ji, or Bahema

Here also, we need some clarification and agreement in using the three appellations above. They indicate the same ethnic group. Hema will be used as an adjective and Bahema as noun. Ji indicates the same group, in the language of Lendu people. But in our study, we will use Hema or Bahema according to the context and the written and oral sources used.

The Hema people are another ethnic group in the Diocese of Bunia. Their classification is also complicated and much debated. They are considered as Hamites, Nilotics, Ethiopian-Nilotics, or Hamito-Semites. Lobho brings out this issue when he affirms that there is no consensus about the origin of Bahema. Those who include them in the Hamito-Semitic group oppose the authors who classify them in the Ethiopic-Nilote group including Somalians, Gallas, Abyssians, Nilotes.⁹

According to Lobho, the Hema could stem from intermarriage between Ethiopian-Nilotics and Hamito-Semitic groups.¹⁰ They might well be from the Galla ethnic group if we consider a few words which remain in the Kihema language of Ituri today¹¹. They might be part of an ancient Hamitic group.

Thus, the Bahema’s history is woven by their remote origin from Ethiopia and the migration, which has affected especially the kingdom of the Bunyoro for more than six

---

⁹Cf. Lobho, Society and Politic, 41-42.
¹⁰ Cf. Ibid.
centuries. The Bantu, Nilotics and Hamitics all inhabited Bunyoro. However, their remote origin goes beyond the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara. Their place goes back to the reign of the Bacwezi in Bunyoro, which was later governed by the Bito dynasty. They settled in Congo from the Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom in Uganda. Even today, there is in Uganda an ethnic group called Hima with whom the Hema people of Congo are generally identified. In Ituri District, the Hema people occupy the following administrative entities: in Djugu Territory, there are the Hema Nord, Hema Badjere, and Hema Banywagi, while in Irumu Territory, there are the Hema South, Hema Mitego, Hema Sota, and Hema Boga.

The Lendu and Hema peoples are the subject matter of our study. We have talked about how they combine both in Djugu and Irumu territories in the Diocese of Bunia, because we would like to consider the broken relationship between them.

1.2. Broken Relationship between the Lendu and Hema

The Encarta Encyclopaedia explains that a broken relationship is a compound expression from broken, past participle of the verb to break, used here as an adjective, and relationship is a noun. It defines broken as “lacking of continuity or lacking order or harmony”. Relationship is “the connection between two or more people or grounds and their involvement with each other, especially as regards how they behave and feel

---

13 During the RCD/ML rebellion, a new administrative entity was created and it is named the entity of the Bahema Baguru.
towards each other and communicate or cooperate".\textsuperscript{15} Thus, a broken relationship is the lack of continuity, order or harmony in a relationship. Therefore, we will consider a broken relationship in the sense of a distorted one.

We want to present some shortcomings, which have occurred in the relationships between the Lendu and Hema peoples. For this purpose, we will take into account the pre-colonial and colonial periods, and then the post-colonial period.

\textbf{1.2.1. Pre-colonial and Colonial Periods (1750 – 1960)}

As in any community where human beings are gathered, it is not surprising to register some conflicts, tensions, and breakdown in relationships. Between the Lendu and Hema peoples such situations are attested, too.\textsuperscript{16}

As a starting point to the broken relationship, each side has its own version. For the sake of time and space, we are not going to present all of them. According to Lendu sources\textsuperscript{17}, during the pre-colonial and colonial periods the Bahema dominated the Walendu. The first missionaries and colonial authorities supported the Hema, who started dominating the Lendu from the first encounter onwards.

It is a fact that, in the way life was organised, traditionally, the Hema were the ruling class in their surroundings. They considered themselves as superior to the Lendu

\textsuperscript{15} Cf. Ibid.


\textsuperscript{17} Cf. Guna; Shatchu Mbeledyitsi, "General Report on the Conflictual Situation in Djugu Territory", 15 June 1977. The same author has written a Memorandum to the government and people willing peace and justice in 1999.
people and even some Europeans thought likewise. The superiority-complex of the Hema people is an undeniable fact that persists even today. Historically, it is known that the Lendu were at the service of Hema families. The expression “nokpa,” masculine gender and “noi”, meaning slave, cannot be denied. In fact, in most of the Hema families there lived some Lendu who considered themselves as integral members of the family. The Hema were their protectors, their moral authorities. For instance, the Hema solved problems and rivalry among Lendu clans. Therefore the Lendu are the ones who first called the Hema Ji, meaning ‘lovable’.18

According to Kaputo, it is wrong to understand the expression slave or serf in its strong sense of slaves taken from Africa to America during the slave trade. Thus, the relation between the Lendu and their Hema masters is to be seen as a ‘relation of clientelism as was the case in many African societies”19.

It is also acknowledged that during the pre-colonial period the Lendu people depended mostly on the Hema for their material life. In this context, Pilo Guna presents the abuse in the salarying of the Lendu who worked for the Hema. He states it as follows:

The flourishing economic situation of Bahema facilitated the integration of the majority of Bbale at the service of Hema (...) Unfortunately Bbale noticed a certain abuse in the payment of their output. This is why certain Bbale refused the work offered by the Hema. This situation created a climate of insecurity between them.20

18 Cf. Kaputo, 57.
19 Ibid.
20 Guna, 22.
If this fact can be a proof of the superiority-complex among the Hema, to be objective, we also have to acknowledge the inferiority-complex among the Lendu people. The awareness of complexes might then be one of the root causes of the broken relationship between the Lendu and Hema peoples. Only when seen from this perspective, can secret and open conflicts, with more or less violence, be understood as resistance or a struggle for liberation.

To illustrate resistance or the struggle for liberation, we may cite as some of the historical facts and evidences the secret killing of Hema boys during the rite of circumcision, the battle during the time of famine called Gai or Agahi, the alliance of Lendu Pitsi with the chief Alur Udjuro followed by the battle against Hema and Lendu pro-Hema, and the killing of Chief Hema Bomera.

1.2.2. Post-colonial Period or Post Independence Period (1960- March 2001)

With the country’s political independence, the Lendu people, through their intelligentsia, became aware of the need of liberating themselves and all their people from complexes (their inferiority vis-à-vis the Hema and the Hema superiority vis-à-vis the Lendu) and the Hema domination. So, the option of the Lendu elite was clear: to struggle for their rights. All the shortcomings in the relationships might be understood in this context. In order to illustrate this struggle we will point to two Bbale memoranda.

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1.2.2.1. Memorandum on Human Rights and the Council of Tsupu

According to Samba Kaputo, in the earlier time of independence, two events showed the lack of harmony: the ethnic claims among the Bbale and a mixed council in Tsupu consisting of teachers, administrators and some traditional Bbale chiefs. The memorandum and tract were widely distributed by the council of Tsupu. The reference of this memorandum is well defined in the letter sent to the major of Kibali-Ituri. The answer to it by the minister of justice is a summary of the Lendu attempt and initiative in claiming their rights. The memorandum and tracts spread by the council of Tsupu explicitly warned the Lendu people about the Hema domination in the land of their ancestors. For instance, one of the tracts stipulated that three quarters of the members of parliament of Kibali-Ituri consisted of Hema. According to Kaputo, this statement was obviously wrong because out of twenty-two MPs, there were only eight Bahema.

Unfortunately, the Bbale memorandum to the Pope does not mention this event, which occurred in 1963, mentions the claim of the Lendu elite in 1962, and of the teachers in 1967 at Fataki and in 1972 at Jiba. It was an ethnic claim for the raise of the Lendu ethnic group.

24 The counsel of Tsupu took Bbale place, 26 August 1963. Source: Kaputo, 384.
To conclude this point, the memorandum *Droits de l'Homme* (meaning *Human Rights*) and the tracts issued by the council of Tsupu with their social and political claims are the forerunners of the actual bloodshed.

1.2.2.2. *Parti de Libération des Walendu : PLW (Walendu Liberation Party : WLP)*

Could the WLP a figment of the Bahema imagination? According to the Bale memorandum, the LWP is an act of slander by the Hema who defined it as a political party and later on, as a poison made in order to exterminate the Hema. But if we consider the Lendu Public Notice on 26th May 1975, WLP is not a myth or figment of the Hema imagination. In this public notice the aim of the Lendu revolution is stated as the fight against those who look down at them, for instance the Alur and the Hema ethnic groups. Furthermore, the existence of the WLP is confirmed by the report of the District Commissioner denouncing the existence of the Lendu political party WLP and its objectives (for instance, the struggle for liberation in order to take revenge and to dominate the Hema). Finally, proof of the existence of the WLP is found in a presentation offered to the Youth of the LORI association in Kinshasa by Tsokpa Ngochelo. He said that the idea of creating the WLP as political party started in 1960. According to him, the Bahema and other non-desirable people making money in their administrative entities had to be driven off.

29 Cf. Minute of LORI Meeting lead by Tsokpa Ngochelo from 17h10' to 0h15' in the house of Mateo Tsokpa situated at Lubefu in Lemba / Kinshasa, 27 August 1989, 1and 3. Source: Archive of Bunia diocese.
Thus, according to the minutes of the 27th August 1998 meeting of the cultural association (LORI of Walendu) in Kinshasa, we might conclude that the Walendu Liberation Party was created around 1960.

In connection with the issue of the WLP and the attempt to solve it, a ritual of traditional reconciliation was performed between the two ethnic groups on 5th August 1975. Despite this reconciliation, a harmonious relationship was far from being established, as long as the Lendu and Hema lived side by side in the same area. This is confirmed by the request for separation between the Lendu and Hema, because the Hema were felt to obstruct the development of the Lendu people.\(^30\)

Further, the difficulty of living together is exacerbated by the rising awareness of a Lendu identity and the awareness of the differences in modern development between the two groups. Consequently, there are double complexes: inferiority and superiority manifested through the struggle for political, social and religious leadership. Thus, it is not surprising to see that the conflict has infected the Protestant Church in Ituri District.

1.2.2.3. Conflict within the 20th Evangelical Community in Central Africa (CECA 20)

The latent tribal conflict among the Protestants of CECA 20 brought about the division of the community into two factions: CECA 20 and CECA 20 Réformée.\(^31\)


\(^{31}\) Ibid.
Unfortunately, this division is based on tribal and ethnic ties. Once more, it was a field of open rivalry between the Lendu and Hema. The chairperson of CECA 20 warned of the danger of such ethnic division.

The study done by Pilo Guna might be considered as a prophecy of the actual violence that is taking place between the two ethnic groups. He wrote that the conflictual situation, if still persisting, might lead to open and violent fighting, endangering not only the unity of the church but also the lives of people and their property.

Furthermore, Pilo Guna defines the Hema or Ji as persons to be slaughtered because they do not know their origins. Thus, one might see the project as a preparatory stage to the present bloodshed. This is enough to show how much the devil of division works among the children of God on earth. The devil will also visit the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Bunia.

1.2.1.4. Block Accusation Against the Local Clergy of the Diocese of Bunia in the Memorandum Bbale to the Pope

The target of this block accusation is the clergy of Hema origin. The local clergy is accused of being a promoter and sponsor of the actual rivalry and bloodshed. Could it be true? The course of events will enlighten if not this generation, then the next one, and truth will overcome lies.

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33 Cf. Guna, 1.
34 Ibid., 1 and 5.
35 Cf. “Memorandum of the Bbale Christians”.
It is an undeniable truth that the local clergy of the Diocese of Bunia is composed mainly of Hema. They were all ordained priests according to the requirements of the Catholic Church. They were not taken from the streets, but they went through seminary training. Indeed, people are guided by their emotions, feelings, and geopolitical strategies in order to hide ill-will and justify their violence and apostasy.

For instance, some sects were founded on purpose in order to mobilize Lendu people against their Christian practice of faith, by promoting a kind of syncretism and Satanism\(^{36}\). It is a new form of voluntary apostasy because most of the priests and the bishop are from the Hema ethnic group.

Here the loss of faith and trust are explicit signs of broken relationships. Thus, despite the water of baptism, the blood of tribalism is still thick. We will now consider whether this tribalism is being spread through the activities of the Cultural association LORI.

1.2.2.5. Activities of LORI\(^*\)

Another undisputable proof of a broken relationship is the activities of the cultural association LORI, a Lendu word meaning literally “the place of talking”, in the sense of the African palaver. In theory, LORI has the noble objective of leading the Lendu people towards integral development, but some of its activities seem to be an inner

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\(^{36}\) Cf. Jangwa, Swahili word meaning desert; Royaume, French word meaning Kingdom; Nyatikedi, Alur language word meaning, small stone. Among the Hema also, we have some people who fallen into such superstitious practices contrary to the Catholic faith. For example, to sprinkle the border of the village with the blood of a sacrificial animal, devotion to the spirits through some specific rituals.

\(^*\) (VOIR ANNEXE XIX SUR LA NOTE INTRAPAGINALE 36)

\(^*\) (VOIR ANNEXE SUR LES ACTIVITES DE LORI-ANNEXE XX)
contradiction. The letter written by Mbuba Labu about the process of obtaining juridical or civil status of the cultural association LORI stipulates: “Our concern is the liberation of the Lendu people.” The copy of the letter of ACL/Kisangani in September 1996 written to the District Commissioner Mr. Kesibu, is addressed to the cultural groups of Sudanese origin, in order to call them to join the future war of liberation. An administrative letter of the chief of SNIP (The National Intelligence and Protection Service) to the District Commissioner shows the tribalistic ambitions of LORI. It states: “The tribal character of the association is at the basis of the projects of its members to take over the concessions and fields of not Lendu particularly of Hema.”

The two previous intentions of the Lendu people will be clearly expressed in the preliminary conditions given in one of their letters: “Départ inconditionnel des Hema de toutes nos paroisses (catholiques et protestantes)...Départ immédiat et inconditionnel des Hema de toutes les concessions situées dans nos entités” meaning that the Hema people must leave their parishes (catholic and protestant) immediately and unconditionally, and furthermore, all the landowners in their entities must also leave in the same way.

37 The following facts show that inconsistency: the meetings of conscientizing, planning and executing the liberation of the Lendu people from Hema domination, leading to liberation from their inferiority-complex.
40 Letter No 05/00/451/SNIP/D1/462/95, 10 November 1996. Source: Ibid.
41 Shalo Lodyi, Chairperson a.i. of the Cultural association LORI. This letter was taken from Mr. Longbe, Chief of the administrative entity of wandalu Pitsi when he was arrested at Fataki, 07 August 1999. The vice-major of the Kibali-Ituri district read it to publicly all the notabilities in a meeting held on 13 September 1999. Source: Bura.
The activities of LORI are oriented towards the liberation of the Lendu People who are ready to fight even to the supreme sacrifice of their last drop of blood\textsuperscript{42}. A Lendu has defined LORI as a French abbreviation in these words: ‘Libération des Opprimés Ressortissants de l’Ituri’\textsuperscript{43}, which means Liberation of Oppressed Citizens of Ituri (LOCI).\textsuperscript{44}

Even some cultural activities like traditional dancing were promoted in order to mobilize the Lendu people in their attempts to liberate themselves. For instance, the dance called *Mashariki* (in Kiswahili, East or Eastern), with reference to the Hema people who were supposed to be sent back to Eastern, that is, Uganda. Even some songs were taught and sung in order to cultivate hatred and to spread the ideology:

\begin{align*}
& \text{Ji nyô ka adu pe bale dza nzû ro?} \\
& \text{Ara ji na ara ji na tsu kotî,} \\
& \text{Ara ji na ara jina jibana,} \\
& \text{Tse, tse tse tse tse tse tse} \\
& \text{Poso djo dhe posodjo the!} \textsuperscript{44}
\end{align*}

*That* means this:

\begin{align*}
& \text{Why do the Hema people disturb the Walendu children?} \\
& \text{Bring the Bahema near the tree;} \\
& \text{bring the Bahema to the place of slaughter.} \\
& \text{Quick! Quick! Quick! Quick!} \\
& \text{Quick! Keep the position! Keep the position!}
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. Dhebi A. Njedha, Letter From the cultural Association LORI, Section of Laudjo, 7October 1996. Source: Bura.

\textsuperscript{43} Cf., The declaration of Ngabulo Baruti in 17 September1997. Source: Bura

\textsuperscript{44} Emmanuella Mandesi, interview by author, 26 July 2001, Kilo, DRC, tape recording.
Finally, it seems that LORI had made financial preparations for violent liberation of the Lendu people before the explosion of violence. In fact, LORI/ Kinshasa, through its commission called AMANI (peace), submitted a project for financial aid. The project requested 6270 U.S. Dollars to the Adenauer Konrad foundation for the prevention of conflict in Ituri with the participation of the main Lendu and Hema representatives in Kinshasa, not forgetting representatives from other socio-ethnic groups living in Ituri. Paradoxically, the Hema community in Kinshasa was not informed about it. Further, the project also contained a summary of the broken relationships between the Lendu and Hema peoples due to disagreement about resources (land, grazing rights, fishing rights) and cultural antagonisms (complexes: inferiority and superiority). These might have been the motives for an eventual crisis in the relationships. The explosion of violent conflict occurred, in fact, six months after the submission of the above-mentioned project.

1.2.2.6. Most Violent Conflict between the Lendu and Hema People

The current Hema-Lendu conflict erupted on 19th June 1999 as a result of a dispute over land rights in Djugu territory, where both tribes engage in their pastoral activities of cattle raising (Hema) and cultivation (Lendu), though among both of them there are pastoralists and agriculturalists. The conflict has escalated, with attacks and counter-attacks taking place with increasing frequency. The pattern of conflict has been largely centred in the area between Drodro, Djugu, Fataki, and Rethy.


But later on, the violence was spread beyond Djugu territory and reached even Irumu territory.

VOIR ANNEXE XXIV
Initially, the dispute over land-concession rights was expected to be of limited scale and duration. Instead, it has crossed from Djugu territory to Irumu, even in areas in which there are no concessions. The violent conflict involves not only the Lendu and Hema; most of the ethnic groups, if not all of them, are involved in the conflict. The Lendu accuse the Hema of manipulating the authorities to their advantage and inciting military involvement in the conflict, while the Hema community allege that the Lendu are executing a well-planned genocide against the Hema.\footnote{Cf. Memorandum Bbale to the cheaperson of RCD/ML, Kpandroma, 12 March 2000, declaration of the Ilema community of Ituri to the President of Uganda, 02 December 1999.} Thus, from both sides, there are inflammatory remarks accompanied by actions of attack and counter-attack.\footnote{During the spiral of violence, there have been Attacks followed by self-defense or counter attack, for instance the date of 19 January 2001 is one of the cycle of violence.}

As a consequence, many people are being killed, many goods are being destroyed and many house are being burned. People are in a situation of displacement and some are even refugees. At the religious level, a crisis of faith is manifesting itself. It is a culture of \textit{Homo Lupus Homini}. The violence is still going on, how to end it? How to reconcile the parties involved in the conflict? What should the attitude be of a reconciler in such a situation? As it is not the first time that conflict has occurred between the two groups, the next section will lead us as we explore of some previous attempts at reconciliation.

### 1.3. Restoring the Broken Relationship as a Step Towards Reconciliation

In this section, we intend to look at the extra-revelational and pre-revelational dimensions of reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema. Thus, we are going to define terms before exploring some seeds of Christian reconciliation. We intend to take into account two
periods: one, the period before independence, and the other, the period after independence.

Reconciliation is a combination of the prefix re- and the word conciliation. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the prefix re- attached to almost any verb or its derivative, means primarily, ‘once more’, ‘afresh’, ‘anew’; secondly it means ‘back’, ‘with return to a previous state’. Also it is good to recall that etymologically, the prefix re- derives from the Latin re- meaning ‘again’, ‘back’. In our study, we are going to consider both meanings of this prefix. ‘conciliation’ with its verb ‘to conciliate’, can mean “an action taken to reach agreement or restore trust, friendship, or good-will that has been lost, especially as a deliberate process involving an independent negotiator in an industrial or social dispute.” Once again, we will adopt this definition of the term ‘conciliation’ by associating it with an industrial or social dispute that may be about land, leadership, management, and so forth. Besides the term ‘conciliation’, the term ‘reconciliation’ with its verb ‘to reconcile’, means bringing about a friendly relationship between disputing people or groups. Thus, reconciliation is “the ending of conflict or renewing of a friendly relationship between disputing people or groups.”

As we are dealing with the Lendu and Hema, it is worth presenting their definition of reconciliation. We have chosen one definition, recognized both groups that sees reconciliation as a process, which explores the profound causes of conflicts, its

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50 “Conciliation”, in Encarta Encyclopedia.
51 Ibid.
development. The aim of the process should be to create a new environment of durable togetherness.\textsuperscript{52} In our view, this definition is sustained by definitions of both conciliation and reconciliation. It can be understood as the restoration of a broken relationship, which is a step towards the revelational experience of reconciliation. Schreiter presents this conception of reconciliation in these words: “Reconciliation as a managed process”.\textsuperscript{53}

From the previous analysis, we conclude that at the pre-revelational and extra-revelational levels, conciliation is the basis for reconciliation. So we cannot talk about reconciliation without conciliation. On the other hand, it is not surprising to notice a switching between the two terms in order to mean the same and unique reality of a harmonious relationship, which is the result of a managed process.

\textit{1.3.1. Experience of Reconciliation in the Pre-Independence Period}

We will deal with the traditional experience of reconciliation. Some customs used among the Lendu and Hema people in their longing for a harmonious relationship are found in the following human experiences: the African palaver, the marriage contract, the joking relationship, and the blood pact.

\textsuperscript{52} Chrysostome Zitono, interview by Author, 13/08/2001, Bunia, DRC.
1.3.1.1. African Palaver as a Means of Restoring Relationship

This model is the first step in any longing for a harmonious relationship at various levels (between couples, clans, and ethnic groups). Here, we would like to say with Bénézet Bujo:

Contrary to the definition given in many dictionaries, palaver in Africa is not understood as endless talking, which would only mean a waste of time. Rather it is based on mutual understanding and agreement, being communicative action, institutionalised by tradition.54

Once again, Bujo Bénézet presents clearly the goals of the African palaver when he writes: “The ultimate goals are peace within the community and above all the increase of the life force for all.”55 The participants of a palaver are either the community sages or the entire people. If an important decision is to be taken about matters that affect people as a community, the wisest representatives of the people are called together for a palaver.

In order to find a solution to a problem, the wise men share their experiences, refer to the entire history of the clan community, and consider the interests of both the living and the dead.

The palaver uses arguments and objections, which are presented through words, songs and proverbs. Anybody can criticize, blame and accuse anybody else. This contributes to the subsequent solution and the reaching of consensus. Thus, an effort is made to discuss the matter, neither by manoeuvring nor by trickery, but rather by taking into

55 Ibid.
consideration the well-being not just of the participants but of all the people involved (the clan community and its living dead).

The Lendu and Hema people living in the pre-independence period concretely practiced this African palaver. To confirm this, the expressions *lodza* and *ite* are relevant.

The terms *lodza* and *ite* both refer to the place where people, especially the wise men, discuss various issues, among which matters connected with the welfare of the people, the difference in terms being that *lodza* was specifically for the elders' council, while *ite* was a meeting around the fire including even young boys, a school of life, a place of initiation or better yet an educational centre. Thus, the palaver is one of the activities done in the *lodza*.\(^{56}\)

Pilo Guna mentions that the African palaver was practiced in an effort to solve disputes between Lendu and Hema due to assassination and revenge, when he writes: “This state of affairs did not last a long time because certain Hema and Bale elders met around the fire to solve it. Reviving the memory of their first contact they restored peace among the people (it was around 1890)”.\(^{57}\)

\(^{56}\)Cf. Lobho, 188.

\(^{57}\)Guna, 23.
1.3.1.2. **The Marriage Contract as a Means of Restoring Relationship**

According to Ngbape, some conflicts were solved by the exchange of women. He gives this historical example as evidence: "A Bale from A'bbu assassinated one of the wives of Grgr Mokongoro (Mgongole), first Omukama of Bulega. As security, the Bale of A'bbu offered a girl called Langadha. Omukama Grgr did not marry her, but later she became the mother of Oyo-Mukuru, the son of Karamagi".

On the same lines, Pilo Guna, when he explains how conflict and clashes were solved among the Bale, one of the alternatives was through marriage. He stipulates it as follows: "Each village was independent and had its chief who regarded the other villages as enemies. That was confirmed by many wars opposing villages to one another. This situation lasted until the arrival of the colonizers. However an alliance of peace could be established between two villages either by a marriage ..."

So, according to Pilo Guna, one of the signs of reconciliation is marriage. But, to marriage can be added another tool or strategy in the longing for peace and reconciliation. This is the joking alliance or joking relationship.

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58 Cf. Ngbape, 41.
59 Ibid., 42.
60 Guna.
1.3.1.3. The Joking Alliance as a Means of Restoring Relationship

Among the Lendu and Hema, the joking alliance is called “lo”, a word in Kilendu (the Language of the Lendu) meaning “hatchet”. The persons involved in such an alliance are “lokpa” (masculine gender) and “loi” (feminine gender). In this context one may understand the English expression “bury the hatchet”, meaning, to make peace with somebody after a disagreement. In the Lendu and Hema traditional cultures the hatchet is replaced by joking as sign of reconciliation. Lobho defines the joking alliance as follows: “The term "lo" indicates, among the Bahema, a special type of interclanic relationship. The groups thus united are held to help each other and to exchange services and jokes.”

Joking provides the catharsis and transfer of emotions or emotional tensions and the expression of aggressiveness so that the social consensus after reconciliation is not compromise. Thus, the joking relationship is expressed through the exchange of aggressive words and kept at the level of a joke.

As to its origin, investigation shows that the origin of the joking alliance was a violent clash, a violent conflict, a murder or assassination from one side of the partners. During the ritual of establishing the joking alliance, some signs and symbols are used.

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61 Cf. Lobho, 112-121; Kihera, 40.

62 Cf. Encarta® World English Dictionary © & (P) 1999, 2000 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

63 Lobho, 112.

64 Cf. Ibid.,118.

Generally, after a violent conflict, a palaver takes place, with the aim of re-establishing harmony within the community between different ethnic groups, clans or even two persons from the same nuclear family.66

From each side, a representative is chosen. The two representatives must bury a hatchet in the ground at the same time. Then, a lamb is slaughtered. The meat is eaten, after which they mix blood taken from their respective veins and drink it. It must be noted that the mixed blood is drunk from a special leaf called "jûdjî". It is at this point that reconciliation is established.

The symbols used during the ritual are the hatchet, the lamb, the leaf "jûdjî", the blood, the two representatives, and the jokes. The hatchet or axe symbolizes all the weapons. By burying the hatchet in the ground, as sign of consensus, they show the end of hostilities. "Jûdjî" is the leaf that symbolizes the oath sworn not to restart hostilities. Breaking that promise can have catastrophic consequences on the erring party. The blood taken from the body of the two representatives and mingled together signifies the unity of the two parties in conflict. The lamb symbolizes peace, humility, simplicity and gentleness. Eating its meat implies imitating its qualities. The joking and marriage relationships are seen as the externalisation of pardon, meaning that reconciliation is total, and the lost unity is not only recovered but also even reinforced.

66 Cf. Ngbape, 40.
1.3.1.4. Blood Pact or Brotherhood by Blood Alliance

This practice is known among the Hema as “omukago”. Below, we will define it, present its ritual and the reconciliation it effects among brothers (by blood pact).

Lobho defines the blood pact as follows, “This practice is an alliance pact concluded between two and possibly several individuals through a ritual act during which the participants usually mix their blood and swallow it”. 67

The persons who make such pacts become blood brothers, contract obligations of mutual assistance, and require the consent of both the elders and the family members of the parties concerned. In the process of establishing the omukago, there is first negotiation that can involve two clans or two chiefdoms (ethnic groups). The negotiation is done as follows:

Each chief convened all the elders of his chiefdom. These notabilities had some thing to say during the debate. After supporting the advantages, the council determined the place, the day and the modality of execution. Then each chief informed his counterpart about the decision taken by his council. After the final agreement between the two chiefdoms could follow its concretisation. 68

As we can see, this negotiation is simply what in a previous section we called “the African palaver”. Regarding the direct preparation of the ritual, both parties do it. The day before performing the ritual, the blood brothers must share the same bed. In the morning, the youngest sister has to awake them. 69

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67 Cf. Lobho, 125.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
Concerning the ritual itself, the partners must observe silence until the end. While the blood pact is being ratified, the officiating priest takes a leaf in his hand and incises the right side of each partner using the point of an arrow. The piece of leaf is put into the collected blood in the right hand of each person and milk is poured into it. Each one must hold the right hand of the partner with the left hand. After the evocation made by the officiating priest, they have to drink the milk mingled with their blood. To conclude, there is the pronouncement of a pledge that is followed by some curses (natural sanctions) or punishments when it is broken (infringed or overridden).\textsuperscript{70}

Such a blood pact was also present among the Lendu.\textsuperscript{71} In the course of history, an \textit{omukago} was established between the chief Blukwa of the central Bulega and the chief Gulu of the Alur people. We have now explored the experience of reconciliation within the pre-independence period.

\textbf{1.3.2. Experience of Restoring Relationships during the Post-Independence Period (1960 – March 2001)}

In this part, we will limit our investigations to two experiences: negotiation and attempts at traditional reconciliation.

\textsuperscript{70} Cf. Ibid. for more details about the terms of the pledge.
\textsuperscript{71} Cf. Ibid., 128.
1.3.2.1. Negotiation

In order to try and solve the conflict between the Lendu and Hema, much negotiating has taken place. For our purposes, we are going to take into account two of them: first, the one that occurred in Bunia 29th July to 4th August 1999; second, the one that occurred also in Bunia 14th - 17th February 2001.

From 29th July 1999 to 4th August 1999, the governor of the newly created province of Ituri organized an assembly in Bunia. It aimed at restoring peace and harmony between the Lendu and Hema. The participants were a Lendu delegation, a Hema delegation, an army representative, and church and civil society representatives. Any other person was free to attend the sessions. After seven days of debate, thirty-seven resolutions were adopted in terms of consensus and all the participants promised to abandon the spirit of revenge that maintained animosity and resentment. They promised to promote a spirit of recognition of one's own faults, the longing for forgiveness and mutual repentance.

From 14th - 17th February 2001 a general meeting took place, organized by the chairperson of the Congolese Liberation Front, Mr. Jean Pierre Bemba. Those present were both Lendu and Hema representatives, political-administrative authorities and the elders from other ethnic groups living in Irumu and Djugu Territories. The aim was to find a way to

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72 Before the ritual of traditional reconciliation in 1975, more than four in 1999, one in 2000, and one in February 2001.
stop the cycle of violence and to restart a life on an equal footing. After debate and
discussion, consensus was reached and all the participants adopted resolutions. 74

1.3.2.2. Experience of Reconciliation after Independence

We are going to deal with the reconciliation in Djugu and the reconciliation in Bunia. On
5th August 1975, there was a ritual of reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema in the
presence of the provincial governor, Assumani. Chief Jombu (Lendu), and chief Londri
(Hema) were standing for their respective people in the presence of other chiefs and
elders. Chief Mangala of the Ndo-Okebo administrative entity was the one officiating at
the ritual of reconciliation. 75

In order to perform the ritual, the Lendu party provided a spear and the Hema party a
sheep. The officiant broke the spear, and then he slaughtered the sheep. Then he
summoned the Lendu chief and the Hema chief. He made an incision at the back of one
knee-joint of each of the two chiefs and extracted their blood from the vein. Both of them
drank their mingled blood mixed with the blood of the sheep to show unity, fellowship
and the end of hostility. However, before drinking the blood a sentence was pronounced
by the officiant, “the first person to break the pact will suffer serious consequences
deriving from that infringement.” 76 Finally, the protagonists from both sides, Lendu and
Hema, celebrated the reconciliation in the act of eating together the sacrificial meal

74 Cf. “Protocol of Agreement with reference to the resolution of the Interethnic Lendu-Hema conflict in
Ituri Province”. Source: archive of the Diocese of Bunia.
75 Cf. Photos taken during the ritual of that reconciliation at the appendix.
76 (Que celui qui boit ce sang et transgresse le premier ce pacte de sang, subisse une lourde perte en
conséquence).
(sheep). Then they hugged each other and the ritual was summed up with a traditional dance “libe”, in token of the restored unity.

There is another ritual of reconciliation that happened in February 2001 in Bunia. In the presence of all the population of Bunia and the administrative, political and military authorities, the representatives made a solemn declaration ending the hostility between the two groups. After digging in the ground the Lendu and Hema representatives each buried a machete as an act confirming their declaration of reconciliation. After this, they washed their hands and signed the document containing their agreement to search for a solution to the conflict. The representatives from all the ethnic groups living in Bunia also signed the declaration.

1.4. Integrating Reflection

In the section on “Overview of the Diocese of Bunia”, we considered two major points: the geographical situation of the Diocese of Bunia and a presentation of the different people or groups living in the Diocese of Bunia.

The geographical situation allowed us to have a look at the ecclesiastical, administrative and political spaces of the Diocese. The second point focused especially on the two people namely Lendu and Hema, who form the subject matter of our study.

77 Cf. The text of the Declaration after the reconciliation organized by the Leader of FLC, on 17 February 2001 in Bunia.
Within the second section on “Broken relationships between the Lendu and Hema”, we have studied this reality in time and space from the first encounter of Lendu-Hema before colonization up to February 2001. Therefore, we have taken into account two periods: pre-colonial and colonial, and then post-independence. It is obvious that there is disharmony in the relationships of the two ethnic groups. The third section deals with “Restoring the broken relationship as a step towards reconciliation” and contains three points. Firstly, we sought to understand the term reconciliation; secondly, the experience of reconciliation in the ante-independence period and finally, the same during the post-independence period. Taking into account the definition of the term reconciliation, we have come up with a social approach to the term and a Lendu-Hema approach to the term. Considering the experience of reconciliation in the pre-independence period, we have found the following practices: the African palaver, the marriage contract, the joking alliance, and the blood pact, while the same experience of reconciliation during the post-independence period brought out the practices of dialogue and two reconciliation rituals.

The first section allows us to conclude this: neither the Lendu nor the Hema belonged originally to Djugu and Irumu Territory. Both of them have come from somewhere outside the current political borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It seems that the Lendu belong to a Sudanic group while the Hema belong to a Nilotic-hamitic group. Despite the differences mentioned, both of them are human beings created in the likeness and image of God. Therefore, if there are any cultural and ethnic differences, they should contribute to the enrichment of both parties because on this earth, human beings are complementary to each other. It is only on this basis that reconciliation is rendered
possible. In our case, the challenge is this: how to recognize in each other the image of God and to assume our cultural and ethnic identity in a positive way without falling into tribalism, ethnicism and exclusivism.

The second section brought to mind the following critical question: which of the three sources to trust most, while it appears for sure that some “facts” are built on lies and that other facts that should be acknowledged are kept silent. Therefore, the challenge is how to overcome the telling of lies and to bring out the truth if truth is one of the major conditions for building reconciliation? Fr. Smangaliso, in his presentation on the theme of reconciliation and healing, confirms the challenge we have just mentioned, in these words: “Only after knowing the truth can there be healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.” However, it is not enough to know the truth. The question still stands as to what is to be done with that truth in order to reach an authentic reconciliation. It has appeared that the narrative of lies is sustained by the way each side perceives the other. How do people consider others? This problem of perceptions might well be present in the broken relationship between the Lendu and Hema peoples. Thus one may ask: if being ontologically Lendu or Hema is a stumbling block for each other, how does one overcome the narrative of lies to minister reconciliation?

In the third section we dwelt on the extra and pre-revelational dimension of reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema. All the findings from the pre-colonial to post-

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79 Schreiter, 52.
independence period, namely the African palaver, the marriage alliance, joking alliance, blood pact, negotiation and the ritual of traditional reconciliation can be considered as "pierres d'attentes", in English "stepping-stones", leading to the revelational dimension of reconciliation. Therefore, they cannot be neglected, but must be taken into account by purifying them in the light of a Christian understanding of reconciliation.

In the Diocese of Bunia, various efforts are being made to reach reconciliation, but the challenges are still present. In fact, humanly speaking, reconciliation seems to be an impossible dream. But, let us consider reconciliation as God's work first, and acknowledge that God is the one who initiates and brings about reconciliation through his presence and grace working among divided people. If we do this and recognize him who first reconciled the universe, though he, himself, is among the wounded persons, we will see that we have to be ministers of reconciliation. It is a divine mission and nobody should try to escape from it or manipulate it as simple human work.

The main idea in this first chapter is that reconciliation is understood as reestablishment of harmonious relationships. This understanding is a good starting point for considering authentic Christian reconciliation, which will be examined in its revelational dimension. With these views, we will enter chapter two and look at the human experiences of reconciliation at the foundational level.
CHAPTER TWO

FOUNDATIONAL HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF RECONCILIATION

2.0. Introduction

Chapter two deals with some experiences of reconciliation recounted in the writings of African, Western and Oriental thinkers and authors. The present chapter will examine three areas. The experience of reconciliation recounted in the writings of Oburu Okot; a traditional African experience of justice, reconciliation, and peace viewed by David W. Shenk, and then the principle of satyagraha as the search for reconciliation in the thought of Gandhi with an integrating reflection at the end embracing all three areas.

2.1. Experience of Reconciliation by Oburu Okot

Oburu Okot was a Ugandan Catholic priest who showed much concern for his beloved country Uganda. During the four years of specializing in moral theology at the Academia Alfonsiana in Rome, he concentrated on the evangelistic message of peace, reconciliation and non-violence. He brought to this task a rich personal and pastoral experience. In 1981, he was detained for eight months without trial because of his strong opposition to the violence and ruthlessness in Uganda’s society. He endured all this without giving way to a spirit of revenge, making reconciliation the great purpose of his life.80

The author chose the perspective of therapeutic love. He was motivated by the care of healing, grounded in the task of the elders to heal and to reconcile. This and the fact that he belongs to the AMECEA region has motivated us to choose him. We will explore his thought by focusing on three points: the meaning of reconciliation, elders as reconcilers, and reconciliation in Ugandan tradition81.

81 Cf. Ibid.
What is reconciliation? According to the author, we should look at the need of reconciliation as conversion and commitment to follow the necessary path to harmony among individuals and in society. There was an unmistakable desire among people of good will to mend divisions and discord, to heal wounds and re-establish unity. This desire aroused among many a real longing for reconciliation, even in cases where there was no actual use of the word. This task was part of the duty of an elder:

In African traditional society, elders were reconcilers and instruments of peace through a threefold role: religious, political and judicial. To play their role with competence, they were supposed to have maturity, wisdom and moral integrity. In the exercise of their religious role, the elders reconciled those who had fallen out with one another. It was also their attribution to invoke God’s mercy upon the community. With regard to their political role, they were great reconcilers and peace lovers. The act of listening and discussing was the soul of dialogue for them in the running of public affairs. In the exercise of their judicial role, their common standard was to act with prudence, wisdom, and fairness. As judges, they were good listeners who gave a fair chance to both the accused and the accuser without favouritism. Truth was what they sought. In every case, the African elder sought to heal a bad interpersonal relationship. In doing so reconciliation was a possible dream in the traditional society.

According to Oburu, every tribe in Uganda knew the importance of being reconciled whenever conflicts occurred. One fundamental truth was that reconciliation was found among all peoples to be a real therapy because of its great religious and moral values. He expressed the necessity of reconciliation in the following statement: “All human beings get into trouble with one another and peace is disturbed... in this case reconciliation is the only solution.” Such reconciliation was made possible because of

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82 Cf. Ibid., 71.
83 Ibid., 72.
84 Ibid.
85 Cf. Ibid.
86 Cf. Ibid.
87 Ibid.
the spirit of tolerance as result of the peace and unity that was valued and cherished in family, tribes, clans, ethnic groups, chiefdoms and kingdoms.

To illustrate Ugandan reconciliation, the author presented the Acholi ritual of reconciliation called *mato opwut*. The important thing to retain from this ritual of reconciliation is that a sacrificial meal of expiation and reconciliation was performed. The two conflicting parties could for the first time eat the meat and *kwon kal* (bread made from millet and sorghum) from the same dish and drink some beer of the same ingredients, a symbol of total reconciliation and a return to a new life. Thus, the sacrificial meal had a very important value in the reconciliation process. Participation in the sacrificial meal showed restoration of peace and brotherhood. The sense of fairness and justice, the act of dialogue and the need for community life, peace and unity formed a social and spiritual wealth in *mato opwut*.

2.2. Experience of Reconciliation by David Shenk

2.2.0. Introduction

Shenk was born into a Christian missionary home in Tanzania. He is an American who lived and worked in East Africa. For ten years, he was involved in educational work in Islamic Somalia. From 1973 to 1979, he was a lecturer in the department of philosophy and religious studies at Kenyatta University College in Kenya. He taught Christianity in Africa, Comparative Religion, and Religion as a Phenomenon.

He has written a book entitled *Justice, Reconciliation and Peace in Africa*. It has two parts. We deal only with the first part: Traditional African Experience of Justice, Reconciliation and Peace. This first part has three chapters: the blessing of peace in community, suffering because of broken relationships and covenant for justice, reconciliation and peace.

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88 cf. Ibid.
89 cf. Ibid
90 cf. Ibid.
91 cf. Comment on the Back cover of David Shenk’s book.
The author examines the way in which the African people have struggled to cultivate peace and reconciliation in their traditional society life, as well as in the midst of their contemporary experiences. He concentrates on the more religious dimensions of the terms justice, reconciliation and peace among people. For the purpose of our study, we have selected some elements showing the foundational human experience of reconciliation, for instance, community as the basis of reconciliation, and the quest for harmony and covenants as means of reconciliation.

We have chosen him for two reasons. First, he is an American missionary born in Africa. Second, the content of his book on the African traditional experience of reconciliation in some countries of AMECEA region is relevant for us. Thus, we will look at the community as the basis of reconciliation, the quest for harmony and covenants as a means of reconciliation.

2.2.1. Community as Basis of Reconciliation

According to Shenk, "African societies everywhere idealize the community. They also have a clear vision of the spiritual dynamics of the ideal society." 92 In fact, the community is constituted of people with various talents necessary for harmonious relationships. These multiple talents are life-nourishing gifts from God. 93 If there is evil, this can only flow from bitterness, envy, malice and hatred. Therefore, evil is a rejection of peace, an affirmation of disharmony, and an anti-person or anti-community spirit.

In order to challenge evil, it is not surprising to observe that religion within such a community is a very important and fundamental means for reconciliation and peace. This is strongly confirmed by the study made by Evans-Pritchard about the Nuer of Sudan. He states: "The Nuer religion is therefore most preoccupied with the establishment of harmony among people; reconciliation and peace constitute good religion and are akin to godliness". 94 The Nuer prayer reveals the deep spirituality of the person in community

93 Cf. Ibid., 7.
94 Ibid., 9.
when it articulates: “Our Father, it is thy universe, it is thy will, let us be at peace, let the souls of the people be cool, thou art our Father, remove all evil from our path”. 95

The Nuer prayer might be for a community where there are harmonious relationships, where people care about reconciliation and where there are some grounds towards reconciliation. 96 According to Shenk, sharing food together and shaking hands are two undeniable signs of harmony. 97 They can be considered as starting points in the search for reconciliation within a community. Unfortunately, wherever human beings are gathered, problems that create disharmony can occur.

2.2.2. Quest for Harmony

In the past as well as today, there have been some evidences of broken harmony. For instance, the unpredictableness of nature, disease and plague, witchcraft and sorcery, the experience of spirit possession, jealousy, envy, gossiping, malice, anger, pride and arrogance, bitterness, etc. All these attitudes dehumanise and destroy life and people in community. 98

More than the mentioned evils, warfare is a tragic breakdown of a community. To solve a problem occurring in the community, people should not rely on warfare. It cannot be considered as a right way to create justice, as long as we know that in traditional Africa, “justice was for the preservation of life, not for its destruction”. 99 Although paradoxically war was sometimes recognized and accepted as expedient for the survival of the community, 100 it was generally perceived as an unfortunate accident, which had to be quickly contained and peace re-established.

95 Ibid.
96 cf. ibid.
97 Cf. Ibid.
98 Cf. Ibid., 17.
99 Ibid., 20.
100 Cf. The theory of just war and legitimate defence. We will reflect on them in the integrating reflection.
This is the reason why some social and religious stimuli were present in African traditional religions in order to recapture the lost harmony. Among them we can look at the practice of consensus, forgiveness and sacrifice.

2.2.2.1. Practice of Consensus

To reach harmony, there was need of authentic decision-making. In Shenk’s view, authentic decision-making in Africa was through the process of consensus. This process did not permit humiliation and depersonalisation or defeat. All could win through the process of right decision. Everyone had the opportunity to speak. As the eventual decision began to emerge, the positions of the participants gradually could shift until all could be unanimous. No one could leave the group feeling that his opinion had not been heard. Thus, the presence of all has been acknowledged, personhood and community have been enhanced. ¹⁰¹

2.2.2.2. Forgiveness

In the quest for harmony, forgiveness was indispensable and important. Jomo Kenyatta, founding father of the Kenyan nation and its first president, though his presidency was flawed by several sad events, knew how to forgive. His forgiveness of the white colonialists is particularly noteworthy. ¹⁰² However he cautioned that forgiveness did not necessarily mean forgetting. His book, Suffering without Bitterness, is a testimony to his capacity to forgive. Through his forgiveness, healing rather than malevolence characterized independent Kenya. Kenyatta seems to have been aware that bitterness would foster the cancer of dehumanisation. He chose the more godly way of forgiveness, reconciliation, and humanization. ¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 39.
¹⁰² Cf. Ibid., 23.
¹⁰³ Cf. Ibid., 21.
2.2.3. Sacrifice

In traditional society, sacrifice was preceded by confession and cleansing of all forms of evil. In sacrificing and eating together the roasted animal, the community was recreated and confirmed.

2.2.3. Covenants as a means of Reconciliation

What does Shenk mean by covenant? “Covenant is the deepest and most profound level of personal and community recreation.” It involves a much deeper level of commitment than is assumed in a contract. It is a commitment to one another, which is grounded in communal-religious ontology. The importance of covenant is stressed in these words: within the traditional African approach to covenant, there is a sincere and earnest commitment to perfecting human relationship. Good relationships are renewed, and new relationships are created.

2.2.3.1. Brotherhood Covenant

Sometimes the brotherhood covenant would be initiated between two adversaries. It is the case among the Abaluhya of Kenya: “The clan elders would sometimes insist on the establishment of a brotherhood covenant between two perpetual adversaries in order to bring peace between them.”

Shenk acknowledges that variations of the blood brotherhood covenant are found throughout Africa. Moreover, very often “blood brothers” are created to bring inter-clan harmony. Chiefs of opposing clans may also become “blood brothers”, thereby uniting their respective clans.

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104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 44.
106 Ibid., 52.
107 Cf. Ibid.
2.2.3.2. Adoption Covenant
One of the most remarkable forms of covenant in the African experience is adoption. The author notices that hospitality for the stranger is boundless. The stranger is a blessing. What about the covenant of adoption? “The covenant of adoption is an extension of ordinary African hospitality so as to embrace the stranger totally.”\textsuperscript{108} Through adoption the stranger becomes a family member.

The purpose of adoption is to provide a way for the long-term guest to become a permanent member of the family. Adoption stresses the true humanity of all, even the guest and the stranger are people whom we need to accept fully and joyously.

2.2.3.3. Land Covenant
Shenk presents land covenants especially after a land dispute, for instance, the land dispute among the Meru of Kenya. They had their way of solving disputes in order to reach harmony and reconciliation. Shenk articulates it in the following words: “Among the Meru, who live on the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya, land disputes were settled through reconciliation and sacrifice. The two disputants called the clan elders into council to settle the matter.”\textsuperscript{109}

2.2.3.4. Peace Covenants Following Warfare
Warfare epitomizes the breakdown of harmony. The evidence of warfare is disharmony gone mad. It is the opposite of peace, which is the will of God and of the ancestral living-dead. In order to show the importance of peace covenants following warfare, the author writes: “If nearness to God is peace, then the breakdown of peace in warfare is certainly a form of distance from God. Consequently, there is probably no dimension of African thought and practice, which is more profound than the covenants of peace following warfare”.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 64-65.
In conclusion, Shenk mentions eight themes as a summary of covenant themes. Covenants establish relationships, which are different from kinship ties. A covenant attempts to affirm and recreate the person's original autocratic unity with God and humanity. A covenant is a very serious and profound matter. A covenant can be established only when there is openness and transparency. Covenants, which are sought because of a breakdown in relationship often, require reparation of wrongdoings before the covenant can be established. A covenant requires sacrifice; it is celebrated by feasting together, usually on the roasted meat of the sacrificial animal. Finally, covenant is acknowledged by the community, by the elders, by the living-dead, and oftentimes by God.\textsuperscript{111}

2.3. \textit{Satyagraha}: Gandhian Non-Violence

Mohandas Gandhi Karamchand, also known as Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was one of the most famous and influential practitioners of non-violent resistance. Indian thinker, statesman, and nationalist leader he led India out of the British Empire. Gandhi was born in Porbandar, in the modern state of Gujarat, on October 2, 1869, into a political Hindu family, both his father and grandfather having been prime ministers to the rulers of two adjacent and tiny princely states. After a mediocre career at school, he went to London in 1888 to train as a lawyer, leaving behind his young and illiterate wife, whom he had married when she was barely in her teens. Gandhi qualified as a barrister three years later and returned to India.\textsuperscript{112}

As an Indian thinker and nationalist, he was guided by the philosophical principle of \textit{Satyagraha}. Realizing that violence was evil and rational persuasion often unavailing, he developed a new method of non-violent resistance, which he called \textit{Satyagraha} and which he used with some success to secure racial justice for his people. Further, Gandhi also reflected deeply on his own religion, interacted with Jewish and Christian friends, and evolved a distinct view of life based on what he found valuable in his own and other

\textsuperscript{111} cf. Ibid., 68-69.

Convinced that independence had no meaning without a radical moral and social transformation, Gandhi launched a comprehensive programme of national regeneration. One way was eradicating the caste-based discriminatory practice of “untouchability”. Thus he is counted among the reformers of Hinduism. He gave Hinduism an active and social orientation, generously borrowed from other religious and cultural traditions, and became an inspiring example of a genuine inter-faith and inter-civilisational dialogue. For all these reasons, we have chosen to explore Gandhi’s principle and praxis of Satyagraha. It was based on a relatively simple form of metaphysics. For him the universe was regulated by a Supreme Intelligence or Principle, which he preferred to call Satya (Truth) understood as God.

2.3.1. Understanding of Satyagraha

Etymologically, the term Satyagraha comes from the words Satya and Agraha. Satya (truth) is derived from Sat, which means ‘being’. Nothing is or exists in reality except truth. Truth (Satya) implies love. Agraha (firmness) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. Thus, Gandhi defines, Satyagraha as the force, which is born of truth and love or non-violence. Satyagraha means civil insistence on or tenacity in pursuit of the truth, aimed at penetrating the barriers of prejudice, ill will, dogmatism, self-righteousness, and selfishness, and then to reach out to and activate the soul of the opponent. It is a surgery of the soul, a way of acting “soul-force.”

With regard to the aims of Satyagraha as a method, it is defined as follows:

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113 Cf. ibid.
114 Cf. ibid.
115 Cf. ibid.
117 To act soul-force means to act according to the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth in the philosophical conviction of Gandhi is God, the Supreme Being. Thus all the action must be in accordance with Truth that is God’s will expressed in the practice of non-violence.
It should activate the soul, mobilize its enormous latent energy, and generate a new kind of spiritual power that had hitherto not been given its due place in political life. The new method should aim at opening up the opponent's mind and heart so that rational discussion could take place in a climate of goodwill and critical self-reflection.  

Gandhian non-violence or Satyagraha contains some basic concepts that can help us in our understanding of it. For instance, we have sat, ahimsa means and Tapasya.  

Sat implies openness, honesty, and fairness: truth. Ahimsa: refusal to inflict injury on others. Tapasya is willingness for self-sacrifice. Gandhi’s basis was love. Positively, love implied care and concern for others and total dedication to the cause of “wiping away every tear from every eye”. Negatively, it implied ahimsa, or “non-violence”. Gandhi’s entire social and political thought, including his theory of Satyagraha, was an attempt to work out the implications of the principle of love in all areas of life.

2.3.2. Rational Discussion and Persuasion: Starting Point of Satyagraha

For Gandhi rational discussion and persuasion are the best way to resolve a conflict. They are peaceful, non-coercive, and respect the moral integrity and autonomy of each party. In Gandhi’s view, two conditions must be fulfilled to achieve the best result in rational discussion. First, since, both parties are necessarily fallible and partial, each should make a sincere effort both to be self-critical and to look at the disputed subject from the other’s point of view. Secondly, a person does not operate in a psychological and moral vacuum. Human beings are complex creatures full of prejudices, sympathies, and antipathies, all of which distort and circumscribe the power of reason. 

From these affirmations flow the following considerations.  

118 Parekh.  
120 Cf. Parekh, Past Masters: Gandhi.
the motivation to act on their behalf. Although desirable in principle, rational discussion was limited in practice. “To men steeped in prejudice, an appeal to reason is worse than useless”. Failure of rational discussion and persuasion leads to violence.

2.3.3. Position of Gandhi towards Violence

According to Gandhi, the use of violence denies the ontological facts that all human beings have souls, that they are capable of appreciating and pursuing good and that no one is so degenerate that he/she cannot be won over by appealing to his/her fellow feeling and humanity. The use of violence also denies some basic epistemological facts or fundamental facts, for instance, that human beings can sincerely disagree about what is the right thing to do, that they see truth in fragments and from different angles and that all knowledge is fallible and corrigible. Then, also Gandhi rejects violence because it rarely achieves lasting results. It only develops the habit of using violence every time when one runs into opposition and tends to generate an inflationary spiral. Finally, the fight for a just society cannot be conducted by unjust means.

2.3.4. Satyagrahi as Reconciler and Healer

Confronted with injustice, the satyagrahi seeks a dialogue with his opponent. He does not confront the latter with a dogmatic insistence on the justice of his demands. He knows he could be partial and biased, and invites his opponent to join him in co-operatively searching for the truth of the matter in dispute. Gandhi puts it in these words:

“I am essentially a man of compromise because I am never sure that I am right.”

121 Ibid.
122 cf., Ibid.
123 cf. Ibid.
124 cf. Ibid.
125 Satyagrahi is substantive deriving from the concept satyagrahi. All persons committed to live according to the principle of satyagraha are called Satyagrahi.
126 Parekh.
The *satyagrahi* relies on the sense of humanity that consists in recognizing the fundamental ontological fact that human well-being is indivisible, that in degrading and brutalizing others, people degrade and brutalize themselves, and that they can’t sustain a communal life without a spirit of mutual concern and love.\(^{127}\)

The slow and painful task of cultivating and consolidating the sense of humanity, and thereby laying the foundations of a truly moral community is a collective responsibility, which the *satyagrahi* takes upon himself to discharge. He assumes the burden of the common evil, seeks to liberate both himself and his opponent from its tyrannical automatism, and helps reduce the prevailing level of inhumanity. As Gandhi expresses it, “the old sages returned good for evil and killed it.”\(^{128}\) The *satyagrahi* takes his stand on this fundamental moral truth.

The effectiveness of *satyagraha* appears in the spiritual impact of suffering love, called also *tapasya*. The *satyagrahrs*’ love and moral nobility disarms his opponent, weakens his feeling of anger and hatred and mobilizes his higher nature. His uncomplaining suffering denies his opponent the pleasure of victory, mobilizes neutral opinion, and creates in him a mood conducive to calm introspection. In Gandhi’s view non-violence works and acts in a silent and undemonstrative manner\(^{129}\).

### 2.4. Integrating Reflection

We have looked at the fundamental human experience of reconciliation and considered some experiences of reconciliation recounted in the writings of African, western and oriental authors and thinkers. From Africa, we looked at Oburu Okot. From the western world, we looked at David Shenk, an American, who studied also the issue of justice, reconciliation and peace in traditional Eastern Africa. Finally, from Asia, we considered Gandhi and his non-violence.

\(^{127}\) cf. Ibid.

\(^{128}\) Ibid.

\(^{129}\) cf. Ibid.
Oburu Okot impressed us by presenting the elders as reconcilers, and by showing us the meaning of reconciliation in Ugandan tradition. For the purpose of a spirituality of reconciliation, there emerges from our study the following portrait of any reconciler who is on the one hand peace-lover, advisor, mediator, listener; on the other hand he/she has the following qualities: truthfulness, prudence, wisdom, fairness, impartiality, calmness, justice, moral integrity, wisdom, detachment, silence, and tolerance.

All these qualities were practiced in three dimensions of life: religious, political and judicial. Therefore, it appears that reconciliation cannot be constructed on only one of the three levels, but it has to involve all of them. In the case of Lendu-Hema reconciliation, this might be an ideal reconciliation. The Satyagraha of Gandhi completes effectively the portrait of a reconciler. His non-violence is based on truth and a sense of humanity. The two ideas are very relevant in the building up of a spirituality of reconciliation, as long as true reconciliation has as its starting point, the emergence of truth and as long as it takes into account human dignity.

In the view of Oburu, it is not easy to answer the question: what is reconciliation? Therefore, the best thing would be to look at reconciliation essentially as conversion and commitment to follow the necessary path to harmony between individuals and society. In other words, reconciliation has to be understood as a journey through conversion and commitment.

On the way to reconciliation, conversion is very important. This conversion can be understood as a change of mentality, and a correction of biased opinions. Only a converted person can be committed in the longing for reconciliation. Any attempt at reconciliation without conversion is bound to be a lie.

If one considers the various attempts of reconciliation between Lendu and Hema peoples, one should ask: was it a reconciliation built on truth? Was it a reconciliation involving the three areas of justice, religion and politics? Was it a reconciliation taking into account the human dignity of all the parties?
Despite all these questions, one thing alone seems to be the truth. This is the fact that reconciliation is the only therapy to overcome any breakdown in relationships. Ugandan tradition presented to us the Acholi model of reconciliation. It is managed by the elders and characterized by a sacrificial meal of expiation. This confirms the necessity of conversion in any search for reconciliation. It also clarifies the reason for insisting on the role of elders as reconcilers and healers. In Ugandan tradition, the participation of the parties in conflict, in the sacrificial meal shows restoration of peace among the people. If we consider the Lendu and Hema peoples, they also have had such sacrificial meals; so why have there been failures in their attempts at reconciliation? In order to answer such a question, we have to look at what could be called a spirituality of reconciliation.

Actually, conversion goes together with forgiveness and a true reconciliation cannot happen without forgiveness. Unfortunately, the greatest problem is that those who need much forgiveness from society find it extremely hard and almost impossible to forgive others. They resort to covering up their errors and defending themselves by violence because they fear the society. For the Lendu and Hema to reach forgiveness, we think they must free themselves from emotional attitudes in favour of rational ones. They have to learn more from the Sathyagraha of Gandhi based on the sat (truth as a result of love), ahimsa (refusal to inflict injury on others) and tapasya (willingness for self sacrifice).

All these values are grounded in the traditional Africa. Shenk, in his study, stresses the concept of covenant. He situates African traditional reconciliation in the sphere of a covenant established between individuals and communities. Furthermore, in the context of traditional Africa this covenant involves even the living dead and the Supreme Being, God. This covenant presupposes a quest for harmony, which goes through the practice of consensus, forgiveness, sacrifice and feasting together. As we can see, Shenk’s development is a confirmation of the ideas of the previous authors, especially Oburu. Shenk’s ideas also reflect some of Gandhi’s thoughts. For instance, rational discussion and persuasion might be compared to the practice of consensus that we called African palaver or dialogue in the process of reconciliation. In addition, the theme of covenant presented by Shenk might be seen as the forerunner to the revealed sense of covenant.
Gandhi, reformer of Hinduism took into account all the positive elements of other religions, for instance, Christianity. He had also a great admiration for Jesus whom he imitated. Thus, the next chapter, which deals with the revelational dimension of reconciliation will allow us to shape our findings and move closer towards a Christian spirituality of reconciliation.
CHAPTER 3
REVELATIONAL AND POST REVELATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION

3.0. Introduction

We have reached the central dimension of our study. Adrian van Kaam affirms it in these words: “This dimension could deal with fundamental spirituality as enlightened and transformed by the Christian revelation, communicated in Church doctrine and related to the spiritual life by the Church’s acknowledged spiritual masters, scholars, and students of spirituality”. Thus, we will explore the Christian tradition and understanding of reconciliation in accordance with Adrian's statement.

3.1. Biblical Understanding Of Reconciliation

The Bible is one of the main sources of spiritual theology. Thus, we will consider reconciliation in the O.T. and in the N.T. Our principal aim is not exegesis, but we will have a spiritual approach with some scriptural references in order to understand reconciliation and to come up with a spirituality of reconciliation.

3.1.1. Reconciliation in the O.T.

Generally speaking, in the O.T., the expression reconciliation is absent, though we speak of two approaches to it: reconciliation among men (Gen. 33: 4; 45:15; 2 Sam. 14: 33; Jg. 21: 13) and reconciliation between men and God (1 Sam. 13:12; Gen. 8:21; Ex. 32:11; 1

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130 Adrian van Kaam, In search of Spiritual Identity (Denville- New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1975), 292.
Though the expression reconciliation seems to be absent in the O.T., the expression atonement certainly implies it. In fact reconciliation refers to the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament. Pierre Adnes affirms it clearly by writing that the penitential liturgies and the ritual of the great Day of Atonement has to be understood in terms of reconciliation.

Thus, in order to understand reconciliation, we have to start with analysing the term atonement, especially in its use in the book of Leviticus. Atonement is found in Leviticus. It is an English Word that comes from an archaic English “at-one-ment,” suggesting reconciliation and agreement. The liturgical feast of atonement or the Day of Atonement is known as YOM KIPPUR in Judaism. From this feast of Yom Kippour, the ritual of expiation and the expiatory value of the blood seem to be a fundamental value in the experience of reconciliation with God as a renewal of relationships and this might be applied also to the human experience of reconciliation.

In fact, the analysis of atonement shows that in the context, reconciliation is between human beings and God through the intercession of the priest. The sinner has to come back to the Father. Reconciliation with God is obtained through the expiatory sacrifice that is a concrete act of reparation and expression of a sincere repentance.

132 Cf. Schreiter, 42.
133 Cf. Adnes, 237.
134 Cf Lev. 5 and 6.
If we can have a look at the horizontal dimension of reconciliation in the OT, there are some attitudes that can be considered as signs of reconciliation. For instance, repentance of the offender by coming back to the offended person and the attitude of welcome shown in the act of kissing the repented offender\textsuperscript{136}. So the illustration above, presents the possibility of reconciliation among brothers, parents and their children despite their previous enmity.

3.1.2. Reconciliation in The N.T.

As noticed in the Old Testament, in the New Testament we have also two dimensions of reconciliation. There is reconciliation among men, but mostly reconciliation refers to relationships between man and God. Taking into account the reconciliation among men, Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift” (Mt. 5: 23-24).

From the relationships between God and human beings flows in a subsidiary way the reality of reconciliation understood as relationships among men because of Christ. This is one of the obvious characteristics of Pauline soteriology.\textsuperscript{137} As a consequence of this previous statement, though the experience of reconciliation can be found throughout the entire NT, we will focus on St. Paul because he seems to be the best theologian of

\textsuperscript{136} Cf. Meeting between Jacob coming back to Canaan and his elder brother Esau in Gen. 33,4; the attitude of Joseph towards his brothers who sold him (Gn. 45,150; the attitude of David vis-à-vis his son Absalom in 2 Sam. 14, 33.

\textsuperscript{137} Cf. Adnes, 238.
reconciliation. Schreiter confirms the idea in this statement: “Paul is the principal resource in the Bible for the concept of reconciliation. Some form of ‘to reconcile’, *katallassein*, occurs thirteen times in the authentic and Deuteropauline writings.” This Pauline theology of reconciliation is found especially in Romans 5 and 2 Corinthians 5. Combining the references in Romans and 2 Corinthians with the usages in Colossians 1:22-23 and Ephesians 2:12-16, Jose Comblin suggested that a theology of reconciliation can be discerned on three levels: a christological level, in which Christ is the mediator, through whom God reconciles the world to himself; an ecclesiological level, in which Christ reconciles Jews and Gentiles; and a cosmic level, in which Christ reconciles all powers in heaven and on earth\textsuperscript{138}

After analysing the three levels, Schreiter comes up with some convictions about reconciliation. Among them, the following need particular attention. First, reconciliation is the work of God. It is God who reconciles us to him. Thus reconciliation is not a human work because the initiative of reconciliation comes from God. (Cf. Roman 5:5: 10-11 and 2 Cor. 5:18-19) \textsuperscript{139} Secondly as a means of reconciliation, there are the death, cross and blood of Christ. Thirdly, St Paul showed concern with regards to harmonious relationships between Jews and gentiles. Fourthly, despite being strangers to each other, in the body of Christ the Jews and the gentiles are made new, a new humanity\textsuperscript{140}. Fifthly, reconciliation has to be holistic. All things are

\textsuperscript{138} Cf. Shreiter, 42.
\textsuperscript{139} Cf. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Cf. Ibid., 56.

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reconciled in Christ in heaven and on earth (Cf. Colossians 1: 19-20 and Eph. 1: 9-10). 

As a conclusion to this exploration, we have to answer from the biblical perspective to the question: what can be said to be the Christian understanding of reconciliation? We want to adopt the summary of Schreiter in five points: God is the one who initiates and brings about reconciliation. Reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy. When there is reconciliation, the victim and the oppressor become a new creation. In order to overcome the narrative of lies, one should meditate, contemplate and integrate Jesus Christ's story of passion, death, and resurrection. Finally, reconciliation is a multidimensional reality. 

Thus, to go deeper into the spirituality of reconciliation, we have to take into account Jesus' experience of passion, death and resurrection. Considering that all the Christian understanding of reconciliation is not only in the Bible, let us move into the writings of the Fathers of Church.

3.2. Reconciliation in the Magisterium

In this section, we will take into account the universal Magisterium by looking at its teaching on reconciliation in the following documents: Church and Racism, Church in Africa, On Commitment to Ecumenism and Reconciliation and Penance.

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141 cf. Ibid., 58-59
142 cf. Ibid., 59-62.
3.3.1. *Church and Racism*\textsuperscript{143}

This document aims at a more fraternal society. We have chosen it for our analysis for two reasons. First, its title is not far from the problem faced by Bunia diocese in terms of tribalism, which is racism at the tribal level. Second, some of its contents deal with the teaching of the Church on reconciliation.

In this document, *Church and racism*, the Church is presented as a place of reconciliation. It wishes to be a place for reconciliation and does not want to heighten opposition. Thus all are invited to act in such a way that hatred be banished.\textsuperscript{144}

As a consequence, Christians should banish all forms of racial, ethnic, national or cultural discrimination from their conduct so that the world may recognize the newness of the gospel of reconciliation in the Church.\textsuperscript{145} This document points out some means of reconciliation. It says: “Appeal to the moral and religious sense of people, use of fraternal persuasion as the only weapon, promote initiatives of welcome, of exchange and of mutual assistance as regards men and women belonging to other ethnic groups, live fraternity. Every person is my brother or sister.”\textsuperscript{146}


\textsuperscript{144} Cf. Church and Racism, No 27

\textsuperscript{145} Cf. Ibid, No 1.

\textsuperscript{146} Cf. Ibid.
3.3.2. Church in Africa

This document has the Latin title of Ecclesia in Africa. It is an Apostolic Post synodal Exhortation of Pope John Paul II made public in September 15, 1995. The theme of this apostolic exhortation is the evangelising mission of the Church in Africa as the year 2000 approaches. Our choice is motivated by the programme of a new evangelisation for Africa and the concern for reconciliation as one of the thorny issues in today’s Africa.

In fact, the pope acknowledges the Church’s effort in promoting peace and reconciliation in many situations of conflict, political turmoil and civil war. The image of the Church presented as God’s family emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. This document presents the content of the new evangelisation in these terms:

The new evangelisation will thus aim at building up the Church as family, avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different ethnic groups, favouring solidarity and the sharing of personnel and resources among the particular Churches, without undue ethnic considerations.

Then, the document underlines some challenges to this new evangelisation. They are clearly put in these words: “Despite the modern civilization of the "global village," in Africa as elsewhere in the world, the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone. Xenophobic attitudes still play too large a role in the world of human relations.”

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149 Cf. Ibid.
150 Ibid., 63.
151 Ibid.
3.3.3. *On Commitment to Ecumenism*¹⁵²

We have chosen to reflect on this document because of its relevance to some of the points of our reflection on reconciliation, namely the ecumenical dimension in searching for reconciliation. In fact, in Ituri district where Bunia diocese is implanted some Christians are Protestants. Further, the Lendu-Ilema conflict started in a very open way within the protestant Church. Thus, in the longing for reconciliation, one has to know the ecumenical principles in dealing with conflict and in searching for reconciliation at an ecumenical level.

The document mentions hindrance to reconciliation among Christians. There are doctrinal differences, the burden of long-standing misgivings inherited from the past, mutual misunderstandings and prejudices, indifference, insufficient knowledge of one another.¹⁵³

Then the document states that for the necessary purification of memories, prayer and conversion of hearts are very essentials. There are also some concrete attitudes in longing for reconciliation:

> With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's disciples, inspired by love, by the power of the truth and by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, are called to re-examine together their painful past and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even


¹⁵³ Ibid.
today. All together, they are invited by the ever fresh power of the Gospel to acknowledge with sincere and total objectivity the mistakes made and the contingent factors at work at the origins of their deplorable divisions. What is needed is a calm, clear-sighted and truthful vision of things, a vision enlivened by divine mercy and capable of freeing people's minds and of inspiring in everyone a renewed willingness, precisely with a view to proclaiming the Gospel to the men and women of every people and nation.\textsuperscript{154}

The same document brings also the issue of truth in the process of reconciliation.

In matters of faith, compromise is in contradiction with God who is Truth. Knowing that of Christ is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6), who could consider legitimate a reconciliation brought about at the expense of the truth? A "being together" which betrayed the truth would thus be opposed both to the nature of God who offers his communion and to the need for truth found in the depths of every human heart.\textsuperscript{155}

Also some criteria are given for fruitful dialogue. These include elimination of words, judgments, and actions, which do not respond to the condition of separated brethren with truth, and fairness and so make mutual relations between them more difficult. As a precondition to dialogue it is necessary to pass from antagonism and conflict to a situation where each party recognizes the other as partner, which implies reciprocity.\textsuperscript{156}

In this condition, dialogue has to become a dialogue of conversion, an authentic dialogue of salvation.\textsuperscript{157} To reach success, dialogue must have a double dimension: horizontal (human beings among themselves) and vertical (human beings with God).

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.,5

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid. 6

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.,29

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid,35.
The document presents dialogue as means of resolving disagreements. Any dialogue towards reconciliation has to be based on love appearing in the attitudes of truth, charity and humility. A spirit of charity and humility must inseparably accompany this dimension, which is interior and personal.\(^\text{158}\)

Lastly the dialogue has to lead to commitment towards reconciliation because how indeed can we proclaim the gospel of reconciliation without at the same time being committed to working for reconciliation among Christians?\(^\text{159}\)

3.3.4. Reconciliation and Penance\(^\text{160}\)

This is a Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Its Latin title is *Reconciliatio et Poenitentia*. The document is relevant for our study and it can be considered as one of the latest that summarise the teaching of the Catholic Church from Vatican Council II until today.

The preamble of the document speaks about a divided world. But paradoxically the

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\(^{158}\) Ibid, 36.

\(^{159}\) Cf. Ibid.

longing for reconciliation is still present. According to this document, penance is a conversion translated in a concrete act and reconciliation is a merciful gift of God to human beings. Thus penance and reconciliation are internally united and cannot be separated. Furthermore, reconciliation is the fruit of conversion.

Then, the document says that reconciliation is one of the tasks of the church. This is at the centre of Church mission. It has to reconcile men and women with God, with themselves and with the cosmos and the entire creation. Besides this mission of the church, the pope is realistic because he reminds the church of the fact that the success of its ministry of reconciliation depends on the reconciliation within the church first. The church is then called to be the model of reconciliation built on the truth. In fact, there is no reconciliation and no possible unity without or against truth. In the next point we will look at some spiritual Masters’ Views on reconciliation.

3.3. Reconciliation according to Some Spiritual Masters

We will look at three spiritual masters, namely St John Chrysostome, Johan Arndt and Robert Schreiter. To choose them we have taken into account the following factors: The first belongs to the patristic era and furthermore he is from the Oriental catholic tradition. The second is a protestant who lived after the reform of Luther. This protestant is among the western spiritual masters. Finally the third belongs to our contemporary era. All of them are very pertinent in their teachings on reconciliation.
3.3.1. Spirituality of Reconciliation according to St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom was born about 344. In 386 he was ordained a priest and he was consecrated bishop of Constantinople on February 26, 398. He died in exile on September 14, 407, near Comana in Cappadocia. We will look at three of his Homilies related to the theme of reconciliation. We find, this especially in his homily on the apostolic saying, “If thy enemy hunger feed him,” and concerning resentment of injuries.

In this homily, St John Chrysostom insists on the care and concern for one’s enemy. There is a great emphasis on the precept of spiritual wisdom in order to overcome anger and resentment. To overcome anger and resentment, John Chrysostom suggests this precept given by St. Paul: “If your enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink.”

Then the author points out the difficulty in the search for reconciliation. He is well aware of the fact that to be reconciled quickly with an enemy is a grievous and difficult thing. Thus a way of reconciliation is proposed, for instance to feed our enemies. This is presented as a starting-point on the journey towards reconciliation. The person to start it, is the victim or the offended person. For certainly no one would have the heart to regard a man continually as his enemy to whom he has given meat and drink, even if he originally does this in the hope of vengeance. For time as it goes on, relaxes the tension of his anger. Though, it is difficult to start reconciliation, the hope of realizing it is still present. To achieve this reconciliation despite the difficulty of finalizing it, John Chrysostom said

161 Ibid. No 5
"no" to resentment and revenge. For him, the best option is to live forbearance in conformity to Jesus who commands the love of enemy\textsuperscript{162}.

3.3.2. Spirituality of Reconciliation According to Johann Arndt

He lived from 1555 to 1621. He was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He studied theology in the best universities, but found more satisfaction in Thomas Kempis's the *Imitation of Christ*, *Sermons* of Johann Tauler, and the *Theologia Germanica* than in the disputations that went on in the Schools and were carried into the pulpit\textsuperscript{163}. Arndt was a centre of controversy because of the emphasis that he placed on conversion and on holy living. He reflected also on reconciliation\textsuperscript{164}. For this reason, we have chosen also to take into account his consideration on reconciliation.

According to him, one who wishes to be reconciled with God must be reconciled with his neighbour, for the love of God and the love of the neighbour are not able to be distinguished. The love of the neighbour is a test of the love of God in man. These are the two goals of our whole life. In his view, love and reconciliation bring peace\textsuperscript{165}. Reconciliation comes about when the one who is guilty acknowledges his sin. He must be repentant or nothing will occur. In the way in which one treats his neighbour, God will treat him\textsuperscript{166}.

\textsuperscript{162} Cf. Ibid.


\textsuperscript{164} Cf. Ibid.; 114.

\textsuperscript{165} Cf. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{166} Cf. Ibid.
3. 3.3. Spirituality of Reconciliation According to Robert J. Schreiter

Robert J. Schreiter is professor of Historical and Doctrinal studies at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, author of the widely acclaimed Constructing Local Theologies, and editor of the Orbis Faith and Cultures series. We have chosen to present his spirituality of reconciliation because of its special relevance for our study and our contemporary epoch. Thus, we will draw on the spirituality of reconciliation from two of his books treating directly the topic of reconciliation.

3.3.3.1. Spirituality of Reconciliation in Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order.\textsuperscript{167}

In the introduction, the author presents his principal questions of concern. These are the relationship between violence and reconciliation, a clearer understanding of the dynamics of reconciliation, the Christian understanding of reconciliation and the church’s role in the reconciliation process. This is laid out in four chapters. The whole of the work focuses on societies experiencing a shift in the social order and the need for reconciliation as a society overcomes a violent past.

The book is a rare combination of spirituality and theology that uncovers layers of forgotten meaning in the term “reconciliation” and its meaning for the mission and ministry of the church in a violent world. In so doing, the author brings to the surface the uniqueness of the ministry of reconciliation bequeathed to the followers of Christ so that they can bring together the scattered children of God.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 70-73.
Our choice is motivated by the content of the fourth chapter, which looks at the church’s role in the reconciliation process: both whether it has a role, and if so what resources it can bring to bear on the process. And Schreiter has proposed a model for a spirituality of reconciliation. Thus, the next development is drawn mostly from the fourth chapter of the book.

First of all, Schreiter defines the spirituality of reconciliation as, “those attitudes that characterize the minister of reconciliation”. Then he suggests three characteristics that mark the spirituality of reconciliation.

3.3.3.1.1. Attitude of Listening and Waiting

During this stage, the minister of reconciliation has to establish a kind of geography of violence and suffering. Thus, the minister of reconciliation at this stage is a minister of listening. It means to listen to the situation.

But this listening involves learning how to wait. Schreiter expresses its importance in these words:

Learning to wait is important, because it takes time to allow painful memories to surface and be narrated, for deep and penetrating wounds to heal, and for reconciliation to well up in our souls. The waiting is not just empty time that must be marked until things happen; it is part of the formative experience itself that moves us out of illusion - the narrative of the lie-into reality-the narrative of the truth.

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168 Ibid., 70.

169 Cf. Ibid. 71.

170 Ibid, 72.
Taking into account this previous affirmation, waiting is an attitude recommended even for the victims of violence and suffering. Nevertheless, the attitude of waiting involves waiting on God and God’s reconciling grace. Only on this condition, it will be fruitful and allow a positive move towards an authentic Christian reconciliation.

3.3.3.1.2. Attentiveness and Compassion

According to Schreiter, Attentiveness grows from learning to wait. It must be restored if reconciliation is to take place and all that has happened is to be faced. Lack of attentiveness is an attempt to escape the current situation. To explain the importance of this, Schreiter writes: “Just as any spirituality cannot hope to grow without turning its attention constantly to God, so too attention to the healing of painful memories is the essence in the ministry of reconciliation.”

Thus, remaining in the scheme of Schreiter’s reflection, a constructive attentiveness is the basis of compassion which is understood as suffering with, ability to wait and to be with, to walk alongside a victim at the victim’s space. This attentiveness must not impale the victim but it has to create an environment of trust and safety.

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171 Ibid.
172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.73.
3.3.1.3. Post-Exilic Stance\textsuperscript{174} or Reconstruction

The third characteristic of the spirituality of reconciliation is its post-exilic stance. A new society has to be constructed on the ruins of the old one. The society will need a new law, but it will be a \textit{deuteronomos}, a second law. The experience of exile will bring a new, chastened outlook to the returnees\textsuperscript{175}. Dwelling on the post-exilic biblical literature as a resource for living in a post-exilic time today can help sustain the spirituality of reconciliation. It can provide it with nourishment from the great prophets of the post-exilic time. Indeed, one of the images, which Schreiter has employed for the experience of reconciliation welling up in the soul, is taken from the vision of water flowing from the temple in Ezekiel 47.\textsuperscript{176}

To conclude, Schreiter affirms that reconciliation is not just a task to be achieved. For those who are reconciled, reconciliation becomes a call to move to a wholly new place, from which, they call wrongdoers to repentance and serve in a prophetic way for the whole of society. Thus a spirituality of listening and waiting, attentiveness and compassion, living a postexilic existence, all of them come to support the reconciler in the ministry of reconciliation\textsuperscript{177}.

\textsuperscript{174} This terminology comes from South African theologian Charles Villa-Vicencio, who compares the post-apartheid situation, in South Africa with Israel returning to Jerusalem after the Exile in Babylon.

\textsuperscript{175} Cf. Schreiter said that a new society has to be constructed on the ruins of the old society. The society will need a new law, but it will be a \textit{deuteronomos}, a second law, 73.

\textsuperscript{176} Cf. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} Cf. Ibid.
reconciliation and to integrate the restoration of broken relationship within the process of reconciliation"\textsuperscript{179}. In the book we are going to present now Schreiter has taken this remark into account by basing the spirituality of reconciliation on the resurrection stories of Jesus.

3.3.3.2. \textit{Spirituality of Reconciliation from the Resurrection Stories}\textsuperscript{180}

The book has two main parts. The first is reconciliation as spirituality while the second is elements of strategies for reconciliation. Thus, we are going to try to understand the spirituality of reconciliation from the first part of the book\textsuperscript{181}.

Schreiter starts by stressing the necessity of having a spirituality of reconciliation in these terms: "Concrete experiences of struggling to achieve some measure of reconciliation require decisions, and those decisions must have some grounding. Reconciliation requires a certain spiritual orientation if it is to be successful."\textsuperscript{182} From the resurrection stories\textsuperscript{183}, Schreiter has gone more deeply in presenting his understanding of a spirituality of reconciliation. For the purpose of our study, we will go straight away to Schreiter's findings taking into account John 21: 1-17.

The scene presents the risen Jesus taking breakfast on the seashore with the disciples who fished all the night without getting anything. What Jesus did in this scene presents Jesus as reconciler of his disciples who were disoriented after his death. What we have seen

\textsuperscript{179} Schreiter, 3.
\textsuperscript{181} Cf. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., vi.
Jesus do thus far can be called the first two steps in a ministry of reconciliation. Attentiveness and accompaniment constitute the first step in the ministry of reconciliation.

3.3.3.2.1. Attentiveness, Accompaniment and Hospitality

In fact, Jesus watches intently as the disciples fail to catch any fish. And so the ministry of reconciliation might begin with a careful but intense accompanying of victims. Hospitality is the second moment in the ministry of reconciliation. Jesus knows how to create a hospitable environment. Hospitality, which sets up an environment of trust, kindness, and safety, is the prelude to reconciliation. It helps prepare victims for the welling up of God’s healing grace in their lives, for the restoration of their humanity.

Then Schreiter linked the two first steps in the ministry of reconciliation to the spiritual attitudes of waiting and listening. Waiting on God, learning to be transformed by the discipline that waiting entails, and developing a listening heart. In his point of view, the spirituality needed for a ministry of reconciliation might be best developed in that learning to wait and listen that marks good accompaniment.

3.3.3.2.2. Reconnection and Commissioning

Considering the question of Jesus to Peter: “Do you love me?” and Jesus’ reply to Peter: “Feed my lambs,” Schreiter brought the third and the fourth steps in any ministry of reconciliation, namely reconnecting and commissioning.

184 Cf. Ibid, 89.
Reconnecting is the third step in a ministry of reconciliation. This reconnection is done through the three questions of Jesus to Peter. Three times Jesus asks Peter whether he loves him. By this question, Jesus reconnects Peter to himself and to the community. Reconnecting is the reaffirmation of truth about the victim, that the victim is made in the likeness and image of God and therefore of inestimable value\(^{185}\).

Commissioning is the fourth step in the ministry of reconciliation. Jesus does this by telling Peter to feed his lambs. Peter is given a specific task within the community. This experience of Peter with Jesus shows a Peter who is reconciled with Jesus whom he denied three times. He whose denial betrayed trust is now entrusted with the flock of Jesus. This commission allows Peter to remember his own past in a different way, and to create a community where trust is nurtured so that denial will never happen again\(^{186}\).

Then Schreiter makes an important observation. For him the two first steps might be fully human work in the process of reconciliation while the two last are primarily God's work. Thus in any human effort towards reconciliation, the minister of reconciliation might commit himself fully in the first two steps that will allow the grace of reconciliation to transform the protagonists of reconciliation. For this sake, some elements are indispensable in fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation. They include compassion, kindness, patience and love in order to overcome the wounds of division that call for

\(^{185}\) Cf. Ibid. 91.

\(^{186}\) Cf. Ibid.
humbly recognize them. When we ask for forgiveness from ‘Our Father’, we must initially recognize our sins. It is a question of being reconciled with God. Then he writes that a true request of forgiveness is possible only where the dialogue and reconciliation can take place\textsuperscript{189}.

He continues by saying that in the Negro-African design, reconciliation does not relate only to our interpersonal relations with God and other human beings, but it includes even all the cosmos. Forgiveness that God grants to us can be effective and efficient only if we restore the harmony with the whole creation. "Forgive us our debts," means also the forgiveness of failures in the cosmic field, because without that, there is no harmony with God or with the human community\textsuperscript{190}.

Bujo shows also the importance of reconciliation in establishing a community of peace. For him, the African tradition, which, today, should be reactivated, knew some concrete steps towards a true reconciliation in order to establish fraternity between men and women. Before proceeding to reconciliation, everybody was supposed to sit together for a palaver. If the palaver was about conflict, everything could end up in a ritual of reconciliation\textsuperscript{191}.

\textsuperscript{189} Cf. Bujo, 80.

\textsuperscript{190} Cf. Ibid.; 82.

\textsuperscript{191} Cf. Ibid.; 85.
The ritual of reconciliation had several forms and could vary from one ethnic group to another. However, there were some common elements, for instance, the common meal with the purpose of restoring communion among the parties in conflict. During the celebration, they could for example mutually feed each other in order to symbolize the life, which one must give to another instead of poisoning. Sometimes, it was a question of drinking beer or wine, for example of bananas, from the same jug and with the same straw. By this gesture, unity was restored. Another form of reconciliation was the pact of blood. One had to drink the blood of the other, sometimes by symbolic gesture to mean not only that unity is found, but that they have became truly relatives. Thus, it is the same blood, the same life flowing in them. Besides the previous forms of reconciliation, Bénézet Bujo presented another one. It consisted of exchanging women. Woman is the symbol of life par excellence after God. Woman plays a central role in reconciliation; she is the expression of the maternal mercy of God.

Then he adds that the African tradition was not limited in terms of reconciliation to the living world, but even the living dead are involved. In fact, it is not rare that tensions, which divide us and disturb peace, originate from the living dead. A conflict situation that was not regulated by reconciliation while the person was still alive, could disturb the}

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192 Cf. Ibid.; 87.

193 Cf. Ibid.; 86.

194 Cf. The prophet Isaiah who presents the maternal love of God by comparing it to mothers' love towards their children.
terrestrial community after that person's death. In this case, the community could go to the tomb and perform an adequate rite in order to achieve reconciliation.

Bujo raises also today's challenges towards reconciliation in terms of consequences of violent conflicts in Africa. He mentions the recrudescence of refugees and misplaced people living in an sub-human situation. The root causes of all these situations are revenge, ethnic discrimination, etc. How can one pray the 'Our Father' if as victim, he or she does not make the first step of reconciliation towards the offender and forgive him or her as God forgives? By this question Bénézet stands also for the first step to be made by the victim in any attempt at reconciliation.

For him, to overcome this challenge coming back to reconciliation in the African spirit becomes a necessity. The various forms of reconciliation presented previously were means that helped in building up an alliance between people and restoring a genuine peace. They extended beyond the ethnic boundaries and aimed at fraternity among all human beings.

In Bujo's view, coming back to the traditional practice of reconciliation will make us more aware of our need for conversion. It is conversion that reminds us constantly that God already offers reconciliation to us by and in his Son, so that we might be really

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5 Cf. Bujo, 86.
6 Cf. Ibid.
7 Cf. Ibid.; 86-87.
included in his Trinitarian family where all are in harmony and in peace. This idea might be expressed in the reality of the Church as family of God in Africa. Thus, when reciting the ‘Our Father’, we must have the awareness that all of us are members of God’s family. We are brothers and sisters; let us be reconciled with one another because God has reconciled himself to us\textsuperscript{198}.

For Bujo, all those who pray the ‘Our Father’ should be basically those who form a reconciled family, which promotes reconciliation. Thus, one should not wait until being offended, but the community should use the prophylactic means to avoid the worst. The Church-family, praying the ‘Our Father’, has to be the champion of reconciliation by regularly organizing therapeutic Christian palaver. During the palaver, each member should examine his/her attitudes towards the others in order to prevent what could lead to frictions and adopt in advance the forgiveness to others as God forgives. By doing so, we might not be in contradiction with African traditional way of providing to the community both the physical and spiritual health. This was a prophylactic way of purifying the memory and opportunity was given to forgive one another\textsuperscript{199}.

In the perspective of Inculturation, Bujo says that to pray the ‘Our Father’ in an African context should bring us to reorganize our penitential and Eucharistic celebrations. With regards to penitential celebration, the faithful should go through the palaver with the community or with those who offended them before any sacramental reconciliation. In

\textsuperscript{198} Cf. Ibid.; 89.

\textsuperscript{199} Cf. Ibid.
fact, the sacramental absolution should mean that the Christian palaver has taken place and all the destructive words are emptied of their harmfulness in order to build the Church as the family of God.\textsuperscript{200}

In terms of Eucharistic celebration, Bujo suggests that it has to be reconsidered in the perspective of reconciliatory palaver. Thus, the penitential ritual at the beginning of the Mass must be integrated. For example, the celebration could start with a brief reading of the catalogue of sins followed by a brief meditation and a concrete gesture showing the exchange of pardon and reconciliation between the participants as well as with God without forgetting those who are absent. In this condition, the Eucharistic meal would be more meaningful as a consequence of reconciliation started from and lived in the Church, God’s family.

Bujo in his meditation brought also the issue of relationship between forgiveness and justice. In his view, forgiveness does not annihilate justice. But justice has to be done in charity and the respect of human dignity. In other words, an authentic forgiveness done in charity has to go beyond a purely external act, but has to meet the root cause of the evil so that the offender or sinner might be able to be aware of the injustice he/she did so that he/she can repent and make reparation for it. The aim of achieving justice should be to lead the offender to more charity. In this case violence or self-defence cannot be allowed if we want to remain faithful to Jesus’ teaching.\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{200} Cf. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{201} Cf. Ibid.; 90.
According to Bujo, pardon and justice are matters of great concern in today's Africa. He mentions some challenges to the practice of pardon and justice, such crimes as: genocide, and cannibalism. Most of those who perform those inhuman acts are Christians. It can be understood that the victims and their relatives might not forget these; nevertheless, they are called by God to forgive and at the same time they are authorized to bring to justice the authors of barbarous acts against humanity so that they may not happen again in the future 202.

In an African context, Africa really needs to request forgiveness because Africans are suffering from the lack of forgiveness as the root cause of all the misery known in today's Africa. In fact, people are not ready to forgive each other. The African value of the traditional palaver as a means of reconciliation is lost 203. We should know that it might be a chance we should explore in today's attempt at reconciliation.

3.5. Integrating Reflection

Within the third chapter, we have explored the revelational and post revelational dimensions of reconciliation in the line proposed by Adrian Van Kaam. Thus we have looked at the understanding of reconciliation from various points of view and sources, namely the Bible, the Magisterium, some spiritual masters and African Christian

202 Cf. Ibid.; 91.

203 Cf. Ibid.; 92.
understanding of reconciliation. Our scientific investigation has come up with some relevant insights and findings for the building up of a spirituality of reconciliation.

Reconciliation has a double dimension. First, it is horizontal, i.e. relationships between fellow human beings with other fellows and vertical, i.e. relationships human beings and God. Thus, in the ministry of reconciliation, it might be better to consider all the actors and their roles in the stages of reconciliation. Those actors are victims and survivors, wrongdoers, by-standers, victims and wrongdoers, dead, future generations, neighbours, and God who is manifested in the human, transhuman and cosmic epiphany.

Theologically speaking, reconciliation has three levels: christological, ecclesiological and cosmic. Thus, reconciliation is holistic. Reconciliation must be understood ultimately as something initiated and accomplished by God through the means of the death, cross and blood of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Reconciliation brings about new humanity, a new creation despite the ethnic or cultural differences. Reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy.

In the perspective of reconciliation, the Church is a place of reconciliation where all must banish hatred, all forms of racial, ethnic, national, or cultural discrimination. Knowing that reconciliation is spirituality, there are some formative dispositions, which are indispensable in sustaining both the spirituality and the ministry of reconciliation. They

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include prayer, humility, and abandonment to divine providence, surrendering to the will of God, calmness, patience, and kindness.

As a consequence, a spirituality of reconciliation should be marked by the following attitudes: listening and waiting, attention and compassion, reconstruction by being reconnected to the community and commissioned to work for the coming of reconciliation. All these imply accompanying the victims and creating for them a favourable environment for the rebuilding of their humanity. It is a journey from the state of being a victim to the state of becoming a survivor, so that the physical and psychological wounds may become a healing power as Jesus' wounds healed the incredulity of St Thomas. If Jesus who was the victim has made the first step in order to reconcile the disciple with himself so should today's Christians.

Our investigation has shown that there are many hindrance and obstacles to reconciliation, for instance, anger, resentment, hatred, narratives of lies, ethnocentrism, excessive particularism, the burden of long standing misgivings inherited from the past, mutual misunderstandings, prejudices, indifference, insufficient knowledge of one another, injustice. Despite the hindrances and obstacles, despite the difficulty in reaching reconciliation, there is hope. From our side as human beings, we have to do our part, though the initiative of reconciliation comes ultimately from God. Some ways and means were proposed. Anger and resentment can be overcome by feeding our enemies, revenge and bitterness can be avoided by forebearing and loving our enemies, dialogue based on love, truth and humility, moral and religious sense of people, practice of fraternal
persuasion, acceptance, mutual assistance, and fraternal life. If the cross and blood of Christ are the ultimate means of reconciliation, we have also to take into account the biblical ritual of expiation and the value of the blood of the sacrificial animal in the Bible as well as in the African traditional reconciliation. Even eating and drinking together have their importance in the experience of reconciliation. The therapeutic Christian palaver has to be promoted in order to prevent conflict and solve eventual tensions in a prophylactic way.

Thus, it is obligatory for the sake of a sincere and true reconciliation to analyse the conflicts in their social, cultural context and to look for the root causes of the conflicts. Among the root causes of conflicts in Africa, we have revenge, ethnic discrimination and lack of forgiveness. The aim of this analysis is that the truth may emerge from the narrative of lies. Only on this condition may reconciliation bring a lasting peace different from political conveniences and forgiveness may have some future. This forgiveness does not annihilate justice. It has to be done but in charity and respect for human dignity. At the same time, reconciliation is not to be confused with a simple amnesty. Finally, reconciliation remains the best way of overcoming violences and conflicts.

After this integrated summary of our findings and insights about revelational and post revelational understanding of reconciliation, we will discuss some of the issues having direct connection to our case study of Lendu and Hema people in Bunia diocese.
As noticed in the first chapter, in Bunia diocese, many attempts of reconciliation were made between Lendu and Hema people; but they have been ephemeral and fruitless. When we try to think about this failure of the reconciliation at the light of the third chapter, we can explain it with the following arguments.

First, the attempts at reconciliation done till today have aimed at social reconciliation rather than individual reconciliation. Thus in any attempt at reconciliation, the starting point has to be the individuals because society or community is the sum of individuals. Only the reconciled individuals can work properly for the social reconciliation. From this consideration, the first target of a spirituality of reconciliation must be the individual. And knowing that in Africa, there is no individual without community, the second target must then be the social or community reconciliation. As a conclusion we can affirm that the success of communal social reconciliation depends on the success of the individual or personal reconciliation.

Second, the attempts at reconciliation done till today are mostly politicised, manipulated and do not take into account all the actors and factors. Further, they have never touched the root causes of the Lendu-Hema conflict. Narratives of lie adopted as strategy dominates most of the sessions of dialogue in such a way that the truth is hidden deliberately. Thus, even the traditional ritual of reconciliation has become a kind of drama emptied of its social and spiritual value.
To overcome these difficulties pointed out, the only way is to base reconciliation on a solid spiritual basis. Thus, we would like to propose the revelational and post revelational understanding of reconciliation grounded on the cross, blood and resurrection of Christ. In fact, Christ is the wounded reconciler in whom every victim is mirrored. His resurrection should be for Christians one more reason to hope in the event of reconciliation and being committed to its ministry. For this purpose, all the protagonists involved in the search for reconciliation should acquire the needed formative dispositions and try their best to integrate in their life and ministry the attitudes of listening and waiting, attentiveness and compassion, reconstructing by working for the reconnection of the victims in the community that is as Church, as God’s family, so that the victim first, and then the wrongdoer might become commissioners of reconciliation. In this line some concrete recommendations and suggestions will be made in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4.

TOWARDS A MORE FORMATIVE APPROACH TO A SPIRITUALITY FOR THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION FOR AFRICAN CHRISTIANS

4.0. INTRODUCTION

According to Adrian Van Kaam, spiritual theology as a science is a theoretical-practical science. Thus all theoretical research in spirituality is ultimately oriented towards the praxis of spirituality\(^{205}\). For this purpose, we will stress the major insights and findings and see how they can contribute to a spirituality of reconciliation that will be helpful to the Lendu and Hema peoples and to the African Christians facing the same situations. Thus, this chapter will have two main parts. The first will be a summary of the major findings and insights. The second part will present some proposals and recommendations.

4.1. Summary of the Major Insights and Findings

In the first chapter, exploring reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema peoples in the diocese of Bunia, we have come across relevant insights and findings. We are going to present twelve of them that will sustain and support our proposals and recommendations.

4.1.1. Spiritual and Pastoral Consequences of the Lendu-Hema Conflict

This is the fundamental insight that has motivated us to make this study. At the spiritual and pastoral levels, the conflict is really challenging.

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At the spiritual level, we have the upsurge of sects called *nyatikidi, royaume, jangwa* and occult practices among Christians. There is also loss of the sense of the sacred and of the observance of God’s commandments. People have fallen into apostasy, spiritual laxity.\(^{206}\) There is also hatred and the culture of violence with all its subconsequences (revenge, displacement, loss of goods and lives, destruction of infrastructures). There is also lack of education and health care, disruption of the familial, social and ecclesial life because of the lack and loss of trust. Thus how can we build and promote the church as Family of God in such a context? From both sides people are wounded and traumatised. There is a phenomenon of dehumanisation.\(^{207}\)

In the search for reconciliation, all these consequences must be taken into account and solutions must be found about how to deal with them and to overcome them. The chance for reconciliation and new humanisation may be a spirituality of reconciliation.

4.1.2. **Obstacles and Hindrances in the Attempt at Lendu–Hema Reconciliation**

From our study, we have come across twelve major obstacles that are at the origin of failures in the previous reconciliation. These are narratives of lies, political manipulation and conveniences\(^{208}\), absence of looking at the root causes of the conflict\(^{209}\), no consideration of all the protagonists\(^{210}\), of the conflicts in the attempt at reconciliation,

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207 Cf. Ibid.

208 Cf. Conflict within CECA 20, the Catholic missionaries (Carmelites, Missionaries of Africa and Brothers of Christian Instruction) unhappy with the governance of Mgr Dhejiu.

209 The fact of considering the conflict only as land quarrel.

210 The protagonists are not only the Lendu and the Hema peoples.
the *kairos* for reconciliation\(^{211}\), and lack of justice.\(^{212}\) There are also more socially based reconciliation rather than an individual reconciliation, ongoing violence, sign of anger, resentment and hatred and its ideological preparation and justification\(^{213}\) as a just war or a legitimate defence, burden of long standing misgivings inherited from the past, prejudices. In our view these hindrances and obstacles to reconciliation are grounded in the way, each party perceives the other. In fact, we have come across the fact that the narrative of lies is sustained by the way each party, be it the assailant or the victim, perceives the other. Schreiter gives seven ways of perceiving others.\(^{214}\) Some of these ways of perception are present in the broken relationship between the Lendu and Hema people.

For instance, the Lendu and the Hema peoples demonise one other, treating one another as someone to be feared and eliminated, if possible\(^{215}\). Considering the superiority-complex of the Bahema, they colonize the Lendu by treating them as inferior\(^{216}\). Both of them generalize and homogenise one another, treating the other as non-individual and thus bereft of personal identity as if there was really no difference. Both sides trivialize each other by ignoring what makes the other disturbingly different. The Lendu as well as

\(^{211}\) When the protagonists have not yet cooled down, they are not ready to hear even about reconciliation.

\(^{212}\) The judicial body has failed in its role, as consequence, neither proportional justice nor creative justice is rendered.

\(^{213}\) Though our study is made within the period from the first encounter to the year 2001, March., the violence is still going on and the Lendu people are convinced that they are fighting for a right cause, a just war against the stranger and oppressor. Thus it is a war of liberation.

\(^{214}\) Schreiter, 52.

\(^{215}\) Cf. During the interview, I could hear such sentences: “A good Lendu is only a dead one, do not trust any Mlendu”, Pilo Guna who defined *Ji* meaning Hema as “a person to be slaughtered”.

the Hema vaporize each other by refusing to acknowledge the presence of the other\textsuperscript{217}. Taking into account the previous considerations, it seems that being ontologically Lendu or Hema is a stumbling block to each other and this way of perception hides the truth by generating lies, reinforcing each party in a circle of lie.

4.1.3. Differences Between Lendu and Hema Peoples

Despite the differences existing between the Lendu and Hema peoples, both of them are human beings created in the likeness and image of God. Therefore, any cultural difference should contribute to mutual enrichment. As Christians, they should overcome their respective differences and build a brotherhood and sisterhood based on the spiritual ties inaugurated with the cohabitation between Jews and Gentiles in the name of Jesus. Thus, in the search for a pacific cohabitation, each party should make concessions about their differences that are harmful to a social life and adopt the differences that may be constructive for a harmonious life.

To illustrate the differences between the two groups, the Hema, since the colonial period, appeared more cooperative and open to modernity while the Lendu were very reserved and opposed to it\textsuperscript{218}. As a consequence, the Hema were more esteemed than the Lendu. Someone may ask why this esteem of Hema and the disdain of the Lendu? It may be because the criteria of appreciation were the good manners and social adeptness in society.

\textsuperscript{217} All these attitudes can be explained by the superiority-complex of Hema towards the Lendu and the reaction of the Lendu through their struggle of liberation in which even Hema children are victimized.

\textsuperscript{218} Cf. Memorandum Bbale, 16 and Kaputo, 233-236.
These good manners and social adeptness were the result of the traditional educational systems that differed in the two communities. For example, in the Lendu culture, when a boy slapped his father, the father rejoice because it showed that the boy was strong and would be able to fight and even defend him against enemies. While in the Hema culture, to slap one's father or to be insolent towards elders were taboos and a sacrilege\cite{219} and visible signs of bad manners.

For the benefit of both groups, we need to share our reflection on appreciation and disdain by taking into account the sacrifice of two brothers in the book of Genesis: Abel and Cain. The sacrifice of Abel was more appreciated than that of Cain. As a consequence, jealousy led Cain to murder his brother. Despite the murder, God protected Cain (Cf. Gen.4:1-16), because both Abel and Cain were his creatures made in his image and likeness.

This could be a great lesson for the Hema and Lendu peoples. Even in the domestic family, all children never behave in the same way and are not appreciated at the same level. One may be stubborn while the other is docile. It is not for this reason that the father would disown the stubborn child.

Also in our view, it is this appreciation of the good manners of the Bahema and their social adeptness that generated tribalism and exclusivism towards them. On the other side, this appreciation and disdain developed the inferiority-complex and the superiority-

complex. Overall, the most important thing is not our differences, but our being created in the image and likeness of God because our differences cannot erase our affiliation to God.

4.1.4. Root Causes and Others Causes of the Lendu-Hema Conflict

The object of the conflict is very complex. Although the latest explosion of violence is the land problem, its main object might be tribalism due to cultural differences and complexes (inferiority for the Lendu and superiority for the Hema) which resulted from the historical past of the two communities.

The Hema group is said to be an obstacle to the social, economic development of the Lendu people. Whatever the case, the violent conflict that has destroyed human lives and properties in Ituri might be a struggle for the liberation of the Lendu people. According to them, throughout, the Hema who were favoured by the colonialists, the missionaries and the regime of Mobutu have dominated them.

But one may ask why this favouritism? The good manners, the social adeptness, the docility, the openness to modernity and their diplomatic attitudes won over the first colonizers, missionaries and the persons who could encounter them. In fact, it was not a case of favouritism but of merit. Only this fact can explain, on the one hand the success of Bahema in business, in studies, etc, and on the other hand, the difference in their life style.
We can conclude that this violent conflict might be a result of hatred and jealousy and the non-acceptance of the ethnic identity of the Lendu by themselves\textsuperscript{220}, as a consequence of an inferiority-complex reinforced by the superiority-complex of the Bahema.

Thus, the violent conflict might be understood as a struggle for liberation from the so-called Hema domination or superiority-complex of the Hema. The struggle aimed at chasing the Hema from Djugu and Irumu territories. This is confirmed by the song 

\textit{mashariki}\textsuperscript{221}.

To these reasons, we have presented, can be added political motivation in terms of national and international geopolitics. At the national level, and international levels, it appears that the social adeptness of the Hema and their critical attitude made other citizens as well as foreigners very suspicious towards them. They are seen as an obstacle to some people who have political, socio-economic interests in the region. At the national level, because of their Nilotic-hamitic origin, the Hema are associated with the Tutsi who are hated in the DRC. This hatred has been reinforced towards them by the words of the late Mzee Laurent Kabila\textsuperscript{222}.

Thus, the Hema community is compared to the Tutsi and seems to be excluded by some of its fellow Congolese brothers and sisters with the support of some foreigners who

\textsuperscript{220} Cf. Memorandum Bbale, 4. There is an allergy to the use of the terminology Lendu to which Bbale is preferred.

\textsuperscript{221} As already said earlier, Mashariki means East. According to the Lendu, the Hema people must return to the East from where they migrated to Congo. For this purpose, a song was composed and called mashariki as part of the effort of LORI in the revival of their culture.

\textsuperscript{222} Cf. Speech inviting all the Congolese to violence towards the Tutsi in general and all those of similar origin and appearance.
dislike the Tutsi. Although it is said that comparison does not always prove its point, the comparison Hema-Tutsi (pastoralists) and Lendu-Hutu (agriculturalists) seems to be done for geopolitical reasons. Even some medias have called the Lendu, Bantu. In fact, Lendu people are not Bantu as are the Hutu but they are from a Sudanic origin. Thus, the Lendu-Hema conflict might be seen as a network at the service of various ethnic, national, and international interests. In the process of reconciliation, all the protagonists should be taken into consideration.

4.1.5. Protagonists of Lendu-Hema Conflict

They do not consist only of the Lendu and Hema communities, but also of other ethnic groups in Ituri district, e.g. Nande people. The government of Kinshasa, the government of Kampala, the rebel movements, the NGOs and international community and the religious denominations, namely the Catholic and Protestant churches have to be involved in the reconciliation process.

The best thing to do would be to establish clearly the responsibility of each of the above protagonists, as the conflict develops and reconciliation is sought. At this stage of our study, we are not in a position to replace the role of justice, which is more competent to deal with establishing the role and responsibility of each protagonist.

Nevertheless, for the ministry of the Lendu-Hema reconciliation, considering the complexity of the causes of the conflict, it might be too early to attempt to establish the responsibilities. This may be an assignment for an ad hoc commission of justice. Despite
this consideration, any minister of reconciliation should be able to answer the following questions: who are the victims, how and why? Who are the wrongdoers, how and why? Is there any party that is both victim and wrongdoer? Who are the sympathizers of the victims and /or wrongdoers, how and why? A justice based on the narrative of truth must provide answers to these questions after the acknowledgment by each party of its responsibility and role in the conflict.

Thus, we have to deal now with the spirituality needed for the ministry of reconciliation. It will prepare the ground for an authentic and sincere reconciliation if all the protagonists are ready to cooperate. At this stage of our study, our intention is to prepare the protagonists to be ready for reconciliation by proposing to them a *modus vivendi* with a spiritual foundation.

Right now, the best attitude to facilitate the process of reconciliation is to listen and wait, to be attentive and compassionate in order to allow the grace of reconciliation to flow from God. This grace may lead to a reconstruction that will at the spiritual level be understood as reconnecting and commissioning the ministry of reconciliation. It is up to the ministers of reconciliation to consider both the individuals as well as the community.

4.1.6. Means of Reconciliation in the Lendu-Hema Communities and in the Traditional Africa and the Portrait of a Reconciler.

These means tried have been: the African palaver, the marriage alliance, the joking relationship accepted after reconciliation, the blood pact, the dialogues and the traditional ritual of reconciliation. We considered them as "*pierres d'attentes*", stepping-stones...
leading to the revelational dimension of reconciliation. Although till now, they have not succeeded in bringing reconciliation to the Lendu and Hema peoples, they still might succeed in doing so if they are well managed.

A reconciler was a peace-lover, an advisor and a mediator. He manifested, truthfulness, prudence, and a sense of discernment. Fairness, impartiality, calmness and justice were also some features of his portrait. Then, he was supposed to have moral integrity, wisdom, detachment, tolerance, and the capacity to listen. The means of reconciliation and the portrait of the traditional reconciler can be seen as sources of inspiration for a spirituality of reconciliation.

4.1.7. Spirituality of Reconciliation

In the perspective of a spirituality of reconciliation, God is the first to be taken into account because reconciliation is first of all God’s initiative. Unfortunately, looking at our case-study, the actual attempts at reconciliation did not pay enough attention to God. They seem to rely on political powers and human justice without the enlightenment of the gospel. People have refused to listen to and obey God’s commandments. Killings and lies seem to be normal. There is an inversion of the scale of values: the good action is seen as bad and a bad action is seen as good according to the interest of the ethnic group. For instance, for a Lendu, to kill a Hema is normal and part of a just war of liberation that can be compared to the Islamic Jihad. For a Hema, to kill a Lendu is normal in terms of legitimate self-defence\(^{223}\).

\(^{223}\) Cf. The spiral of violence in the Lendu–Hema conflict.
A spirituality for the ministry of reconciliation will be holistic by covering all the dimensions of life and the network of relationships which are human, transhuman, and cosmic. In fact, God is manifested in each one of them.

A spirituality for the ministry of reconciliation will deal first of all with the individual, and then with a given community, by carrying out in both cases the following scheme: Reconciliation — Forgiveness — Repentance, then Repentance — Forgiveness — Reconciliation. In the first case, the individual, who has succeeded in becoming a survivor from his/her state of victim, will offer reconciliation to the wrongdoer, even if the wrongdoer is not yet aware of his/her wrongs and does not feel guilty. Here, reconciliation is a result of a creative justice. In the second case, the wrongdoer as an individual and community must show repentance, conversion before any attempt at reconciliation. Then, reconciliation is a result of a proportional justice.

Finally, a spirituality for the ministry of reconciliation will be built on the following attitudes: listening to the pain and the progress, and waiting for the right moment to address the readiness of both parties, attentiveness to the suffering, and compassion to feel with the hurt of the wounded, reconstruction and rehabilitation through reconnection and commissioning at the right time for the ritual celebration that can restore the lost humanness, wash away the past, and bring about a readjustment to a new approach to life. It does not deny the reality of the past, but let it go and move on in a more positive and life producing spirit.
4.2. Proposals and Recommendations for the Practicability of a Spirituality of Reconciliation Between the Lendu and Hema Peoples.

In order to show the practicability of a spirituality of reconciliation in Bunia diocese, we will address the protagonists of the Lendu-Hema conflict through the following proposals and recommendations:

**4.2.1. To the Lendu Community**

Considering that the actual violent conflict may be a part of the Lendu liberation war well-prepared by some Lendu leaders through the Cultural association LORI, these leaders are invited to use positively their influence on the Lendu people and to channel positively their struggle for liberation by means of the integral development of their people. To make it successful, all the Lendu sympathisers, national as well as international, should influence positively the Lendu leaders.

Considering the activities of the cultural association LORI, there have been some deviations. Thus, they have to exorcise and purify LORI from its ideology of ethnic discrimination towards Hema people.

Considering that the Lendu people follow directives and instructions given by their leaders, reconciliation has to start with the leaders. Once again all those who have any kind of influence and authority should exercise a special ministry of reconciliation towards Lendu leaders by organising some workshops and seminars on reconciliation.
Under the initiative of the NGOs dealing with conflict resolution, Lendu leaders must sit together with their elders to propose a plan of reconciliation.

The Lendu warriors and the part of the Lendu population which have for the strategic purposes withdrawn to the bush have to be ready to rebuilt in the midst of destruction on coming back from the bush to an environment where their readiness for reconciliation can be easily addressed. This might be done also with the assistance of a responsible government, NGOs committed to reconciliation, ecumenical service of reconciliation and the diocesan office of *CARITAS*.

The Lendu community should change its way of perceiving the Hema people. All the Hema people are not wrongdoers, landowners, or oppressors. A radical change in the way of looking at the Hema people will prepare the ground for reconciliation even when living apart.

The Lendu community should overcome its inferiority-complex vis-à-vis the Hema and let go off the past. They should convert their hostile historical past with the Hema into a creative past that would lead to new and creative relationships. For this purpose, it will be necessary to establish counselling centres and to promote both individual and group spiritual direction for the healing ministry.
If the Lendu consider themselves victims of the conflict, then they should take the first steps towards reconciliation. They have to offer forgiveness that will bring the Hema party to repentance and reparation.

4.2.2. To the Hema Community

The Hema community has to free itself from its superiority-complex towards the Lendu. One way of healing themselves from the mentioned complex could be to abandon a scornful and arrogant language towards the Lendu.

The Hema should know that all the Walendu are not wrongdoers. Those who are not wrongdoers provide a chance for the success of reconciliation. Thus, they should offer to those categories of Walendu a hospitable psychological environment that will encourage them and make them feel more confident and warmer the relationships. The Hema should change their way of looking down at the Walendu.

If the Hema consider they are victims of the conflict, they have to take the first step towards reconciliation by offering forgiveness to the Lendu. If both sides cannot offer forgiveness followed by a concrete act of reparation from the wrongdoers, they can say with Jesus on the cross: “Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.”

Cf. Somasi, interviewed by Author, 12 July 201, Bambu, DRC, oral.
4.2.3. To the Other Ethnic Communities of Bunia Diocese and Ituri District

As a reminder, these communities consist of Bira, Nyali, Bendi, Lese, Mambisa, Ndo Okebo, Ndo, Alur, Lugwa, Kakwa, Kaliko, etc. Some of them, if not all of them, are in one way or another victims of the Lendu–Hema violent conflict. Among them might be by-standers or even sympathizers of the parties in conflict.

The most important thing they should do is to contribute to ending the conflict. Thus, they should not take the conflict as a problem of Lendu and Hema peoples only. Concretely, they have to condemn the wrong done by making an official declaration of condemnation through the media without compromising the truth.

They have to build an “Iturian” consciousness that may enable all of them to feel as brothers and sisters despite their respective differences. On the contrary, the differences and various talents of different ethnic groups should help to a mutual enrichment. Actually, they have to create and promote cultural associations, aiming at the integral development of the Ituri district for the good of the whole country. Thus, they have to say “no” to tribalism and ethnic discrimination.

4.2.4. To Other Ethnic Groups of the Democratic Republic of Congo

All of them should lay greater stress on the national identity rather than ethnic origin. Here the great danger is the emphasis put on the subdivision into Bantu and non-Bantu. It seems that the Bantu are more Congolese than the Nilotes and Hamitic-Nilotes. This way
of looking at the ethnic groups in Congo may still complicate any process towards reconciliation be it local, regional or national.

4.2.5. To the Government of Kinshasa

In the context of national geopolitics, the government of Kinshasa should know that it has played a leading role in the Lendu–Hema conflict by inviting all the Congolese to ethnic violence and hatred towards the Tutsi for the reason already stated. Thus, the government should restore trust among all Congolese citizens by apologizing to the Tutsi and the Hema of DRC. The sign of such an apology may be to retract the words of hatred and incitement to ethnic violence. In the case of Lendu-Hema conflict, these words have been a kind of governmental permission to chase the Hema to mashariki.

The government should show impartiality and not use the Lendu-Hema conflict for political interest and convenience. Thus, the executive, legislative and judicial departments of the government should speak on the Lendu-Hema conflict in a responsible way.

4.2.6. To the Government of Kampala and the Rebels’ Leaders of RCD/ML and MLC

As long as the Lendu and Hema communities belong to the area under Ugandan occupation, the Ugandan government is supposed to do its best to stop the conflict. In fact politically and economically, the conflict seems to benefit the Ugandan government, and the conflict has become a kind of business for the Ugandan military officers stationed

\[ \text{Cf. Footnote No 240.} \]
in Congo. Instead of satisfying their cupidity on the blood of innocent people, they should stop the violent conflict at once because, we believe that they have the power to do so.

The rebel leaders of RCD/ML and MLC have used this conflict for their political positioning. Yes, a kingdom cannot be built on the blood of its members. The leaders must be responsible and like shepherds who unite the people of Ituri district without becoming wolves devouring the people under their leadership.

They should work for the reunification of the country and people by starting the national reconciliation process with the government of Kinshasa.

They should commit themselves to the accomplishment of a proportional justice based on truth, in order to restore trust in each other. For instance, the judicial instance should be purified from its corrupt members.

4.2.7. To NGOs and the International Community

It is a pity that the NGOs working in Bunia have come to deal more with the consequences of tribal conflicts rather than with the causes and ways of solving them. Furthermore, some NGOs have been partial in the field in such a way that the conflict is far from ending. As NGOs, they have to be impartial, be listeners and show compassion to all the parties involved in the conflict.

The NGOs dealing with conflict resolution and reconciliation have to analyse and propose appropriate strategies in solving the Lendu-Hema conflict bringing the two
peoples to reconciliation. The International community should organise a regional conference on Lendu-Hema conflict in order to establish the truth and to support the establishment of a special penal court to deal with the violations of human rights in this conflict so that justice may be done.

The rapprochement made by the International Community between Hema and Tutsi and the Lendu (Sudanic) and Hutu (Bantu) has not proved helpful in reconnecting and commissioning the protagonists of the violent conflict. Thus, the International Community should look critically at all the information it receives in order to avoid a one-sided and erroneous interpretation that will be more harmful than helpful in the search for reconciliation.

In order to stop the spiral of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the International Community could, for instance, denounce and punish the complicity and implication of some foreign governments that support rebels and sell weapons.

4.2.8. To the Churches (Catholic and Protestant)

Here, we have to address both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches at all levels. They have to know that they are places and ministers of reconciliation. Thus, they have a big responsibility in uniting their scattered members in handling the conflict and in looking for ways to overcome it.
All the faithful should build their brotherhood and sisterhood more on the blood of Christ and the baptism received in his name rather than on ethnic ties. The Church should promote Christian unity and look for strategies to help each group to overcome its Superiority or inferiority-complexes.

Leaders of the Churches should live according to the evangelical wisdom in order to play fully their role of reconciler and healers. The Catholic and Protestant Churches should take their responsibility in facing and overcoming the challenge of tribalism and violent conflict by promoting a Church understood as God’s family, to find a new strategy for re-evangelisation where the enemies of yesterday will be recreated anew, and promote an ecumenical ministry of both individual and social reconciliation.

Catholic and Protestant communities may organise ceremonies designed to enable people to acknowledge their different levels of involvement in the conflict. These services should be held at denominational and ecumenical levels and should be organised locally, regionally, and nationally.

Catholic and Protestant Churches may organise seminars and workshops on reconciliation for members of both communities and all those who are ready to commit themselves to the ministry of reconciliation. They may consider creating a general fund, to be financed in proportion to their resources and that can be used for the victims of the conflict. Leaders from both Catholic and Protestant churches should involve themselves
in the process of reconciliation in their ministry of preaching and their respective means of social communication such as radio, TV, journals and magazines.

4.2.9. Programme-Model for the Healing of Trauma.

Here, the government and the Churches may collaborate in training personnel and creating centres for counselling, seminars on reconciliation, recollection and retreat.

4.2.10. Strategy for Uncovering the Hidden Truth

For the uncovering of truth, those who are committed to the work of reconciliation should take into account that truth must correspond exactly to what happened and what is said about the event. This is essential for the reconstruction of the social order.

4.2.11. Strategy for an Equitable Justice in a Process of Reconciliation

Justice in the reconciliation process must be examined carefully. Care must be taken that the justice sought is genuinely formative and punitive but not simply revengeful. This justice should seek to make amends by providing reparation, restitution or compensation for the victims. It should aim at the structural inequities of a society that are the source of the conflict that led to the violence. Justice should be directed to the reform of law and of the judiciary. Such justice will be a creative justice dictated and oriented by love.

4.2.12. Integration of the Eucharistic Celebration in the Process of Reconciliation

Taking into account the importance of the sacrificial meal in the ritual of reconciliation, for the people in the process of reconciliation, the Eucharistic celebration is an
• Educating people to mutual respect and esteem, in order to help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between Lendu and Hema peoples and other people of different ethnic groups.

• Fostering the culture of dialogue as therapeutic palaver, so that there will be an increase of understanding and mutual trust between the Lendu and Hema both as individuals and communities, for these are the premises of authentic peace and reconciliation.

• Listening and waiting, attentiveness and compassion, reconnecting and commissioning the victims and the wrongdoers.

• Frank and patient dialogue in terms of therapeutic palaver, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable barrier, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding and enrichment.

• Forgiving one another for past and present errors and prejudices, and to supporting one another in a common effort both to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that reconciliation without justice and forgiveness is not a true reconciliation.

• Taking the side of the victims from both sides of the Lendu-Hema conflict and other ethnic groups, speaking out for them, collecting reparation and apologizing to them.

• Taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to ethnic violence and evil, and desiring to make every effort possible to offer the men and women of our time real hope for justice and peace.
appropriate place for the mystagogic teaching on reconciliation offered by God through the sacrifice of His Son.

For the African Christians belonging to the Catholic Church, the Eucharistic celebration, should take the central place in a ritual of reconciliation. Thus, the therapeutic palaver might be the starting point in which we have listening, attentiveness, and compassion. Establishment of the truth might be the second step based on creative love. Offering of reconciliation might be the third step as one of the functions of creative love. All the three steps may take several days.

The Eucharistic celebration might be the fourth step in which the forgiveness offered by the individual is achieved by God. Thus, trust might be restored and individual or social reparation might open the door to the last step in which the reconnection and commissioning can be inaugurated in a meal taken together. During the meal a firm declaration of commitment towards reconciliation may take place.

The following can be the elements of a sincere commitment to the ministry of reconciliation: We commit ourselves to:

- Proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and tribalism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion, and we renounce and condemn every recourse to violence in the name of tribal loyalties.
- Doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of tribalism.
- Encouraging all efforts to promote friendship between Lendu and Hema peoples by promoting African solidarity.

- Urging leaders of both ethnic groups, leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the representatives of NGOs and the International Community to make every effort to create and consolidate, on national and international levels, a world of solidarity, peace and reconciliation based on a creative justice.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the first chapter, on the exploration of reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema peoples in the Diocese of Bunia, we had four sections. The first section has allowed us to have an overview of the Diocese, the two ethnic groups in their ecclesiastical, administrative and political settings. The second section, on "Broken relationship between the Lendu and Hema" was a study delimited in space and time and covering the first encounter of the Lendu-Hema peoples before the colonization up to February 2001. All the sources have unanimously confirmed the existence of disharmony between the two ethnic groups. The third section entitled "Restoring the broken relationship as a step towards reconciliation" contains three points. First, an understanding of the term 'reconciliation'; second, the experience of reconciliation in the pre-independence period and finally, the same during the post-independence period.

In the second chapter, our main task has been to look at the fundamental human experience of reconciliation. For this purpose, we have considered some experiences of reconciliation according to African (Oburu Okot), western (David Shenk) and oriental (Gandhi) authors.

Chapter three has explored the revelational and post revelational dimensions of reconciliation in the line proposed by Adrian Van Kaam. In it, we have looked at the understanding of reconciliation from various points of view and sources: namely the Bible, the Magisterium, some Spiritual Masters and an African approach of African
Christian reconciliation. We have come up with some relevant insights and findings in the building up of a spirituality for the ministry of reconciliation.

In the fourth chapter with the title, “Towards a more formative perspective of a spirituality for the ministry of reconciliation, we have summarised some relevant findings and insights. Finally in the light of these findings and insights, we have made some proposals and recommendations for the practicability of such a spirituality.

The foundational and formative elements of the spirituality for a ministry of reconciliation are the following attitudes: listening, waiting, attentiveness, compassion, reconnection and commission. They take into account both dimensions of reconciliation: horizontal and vertical because spirituality for the ministry of reconciliation has to be holistic.

The present work has certainly not exhausted the discussion on the topic. Rather it is a contribution to solving the violent conflict among the Lendu and the Hema people. The intention of the work is to help any person and any institution in search for the resolution of the Lendu-Hema conflict, or any other conflict in order to reach a genuine reconciliation. The ministers of reconciliation may be enlightened and inspired by this work aiming at the process of reconciliation, which has a paramount importance in spirituality.
Much more could be said in this work, but we cannot exhaust the subject. For instance, we did not approach or deepen the place of sacramental reconciliation in the process of reconciliation, the moral problem of just-war, the justification for self-defence in the search for reconciliation, the participation of women in the process of reconciliation, the challenges concerning the unreadiness for reconciliation faced by the people in the diocese of Bunia in some areas, etc. Therefore, further studies on the topic might allow us or any other person to deepen the topic.
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APPENDIX I QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: MOKUBA ROGEMBA ANDJOIRA FUMI VILVENTIN JEAH AI
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1. In the course of history, were any conflict, war among the Lendu and Hema peoples?
2. Why this (These) conflict(s) occurred between those two people?
3. In the past conflicts, what were the root causes of the Lendu-Hema conflict?
4. How were they solved?
5. Would you like to present the process for reconciliation in the past?
6. Would you like to explain the following covenants in the process of the traditional reconciliation?
   A) Marriage alliance
   B) Blood pact
   C) Joking relationship
7. Would you like to explain the symbols and signs used during the ritual of any traditional reconciliation?
8. Would you like to present the protagonists in the traditional reconciliation and their role?
9. Would you like to define reconciliation?
10. Would you like to say the reasons for the failure of the previous attempt at Lendu-Hema reconciliation?
11. What could you suggest for a genuine reconciliation?
APPENDIX II LIST OF INFORMANTS


30. Machozzi Mwanamolo, interview by author, 10 June 2001, Bunia, DRC, oral.


34. Mbidha Jacqueline, interview by author, 8 July 2001, Kilo DRC, oral.


42. Smi Jacques, interview by author, 6 July 2001, Mongbwalu, DRC, oral.


44. Tangirabo Bungamuzi, interview by author, 23 June 2001, Bunia, DRC, oral.


47. Wilka, interview by author, 10 June 2001, Mudzi Pela, DRC, oral.

APPENDIX III MAPS

Map No 1: Ethnic group in the DRC
MAP No 2: The diocese of Bunia with its twelve parishes

MAP No 3: Bunia and its surroundings

Source: Esri data/Atlases 2001
APPENDIX IV PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs showing a scene of the traditional reconciliation between the Lendu and the Icma in Djugu, 1975.