only after Milton Friedman managed to lure people away from recognising that the word actually means 'the exploitation of the workers' (p. 317).

This type of fare continues for over 300 pages. The findings are repeated at the end of each of the sixteen chapters and in the conclusion. They keep the author in a perpetual state of astonishment, agitation and anxiety over conservative Christian educators actually basing their teaching on the Bible literally understood, over Christian publishers actually publishing Christian materials, and over democratically-elected decision-makers in a Christian-majority country actually accepting such teachings and materials into their school textbooks.

Others might regard all this as self-evident, but to Wellman this is 'historical miseducation' (p. 303) that seeks to 'make Americans compliant and passive, living under a capitalistic Christian government legitimated by biblical law' (p. 305). This threat to 'pluralistic democracy' (p. 15) requires that all conservative Christian perspectives 'should be ruled out of education paid for with public monies' (p. 302), including in voucher-funded private schools. Herewith are exposed the real purposes of this book, about which Wellman is quite open throughout. This book is written not so much to add to knowledge about the Christian Right as to inspire resistance to it.

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The genocide against the Tutsi, and the Rwandan Churches. Between grief and denial. By Philippe Denis. (Religion in Transforming Africa.) Pp. xiv + 344 incl. 1 map and 2 tables. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2022. £70. 978 1 84701 290 6

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Philippe Denis has written an excellent new book on the complicated roles of Christian Churches, most notably the Catholic Church, during the 1994 Rwanda genocide. His thesis is not terribly original – namely that Christian leaders bear 'moral guilt' in light of their indifference and passivity in the face of the genocide against the Tutsi (p. 308). What distinguishes Denis's book is not its argument, however, but rather the wealth of new historical details he uncovers about the varying roles played by Catholic and Presbyterian actors before, during and immediately after the genocide.

Although he is primarily concerned with the 1990s, Denis's earlier history is serviceable. Rightly in my mind, he focuses on the late colonial and early post-colonial period when Hutu and Tutsi identities became politicised, leading to the outbreak of the first major massacres of Tutsi between 1959 and 1964. Although a minority of Catholic clergy stood by Tutsi victims, the overall tenor of missionary support for Hutu political emancipation is summarily captured by the White Father Walter Aelvot's disturbing line: 'Since there were corpses, that was very hard. But deep down I was happy. Something historical was happening, the liberation of a people' (p. 34).

Denis follows Timothy Longman among others in denouncing the Catholic bishops' responses to ethnic violence in the early 1990s. It was not that the bishops were silent. Rather, their statements on pre-genocide massacres lamented the violence yet failed to hold the government responsible. Yet one of the strengths

of Denis's book is that he does not just paint in broad strokes. Rather, he notes how the Catholic Church shifted from a robustly pro-government position in 1990–1 to more of a mediator role in 1992–3. The turning point here was the Kabgayi bishop Thadée Nsengiyumva's December 1991 pastoral letter that famously castigated the Catholic Church as a 'giant with feet of clay' (p. 60). Working through the ecumenical *Comité de Contacts*, Catholic officials opened back channels with the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and helped to bring it and the government to the negotiating table, culminating with the Arusha peace accords of August 1993.

Denis's analysis of the genocide itself is also commendable for its specificity. Many (myself included) have claimed that churches were the primary killing grounds. Denis notes, however, that only 12 per cent of genocide victims died inside church buildings. Likewise, the Catholic bishops were not silent during the genocide; they in fact issued or joined eight statements between April and June 1994. In turn, only thirty-six Catholic religious or clergy were tried on genocide charges at the international or national *gacaca* levels, and one-third of these were released or acquitted. Yet Denis does not by any means exonerate the Catholic Church from responsibility. Church leaders never called out the government for its genocidal campaign. Even more damning, they did not condemn the widespread radio propaganda that 'all Tutsi were accomplices of the RPF and deserved to be killed' (p. 87). Denis also faults missionaries for largely abandoning their flocks, thus leaving Tutsi congregants at the mercy of *génocidaires*, who also killed upwards of a hundred predominantly Tutsi clergy.

Denis is also quite critical of the Catholic Church's halting efforts to move forward from the genocide. Rather than take ownership of their silent (and at times active) complicity in the killings, church leaders obfuscated, and not a single priest or religious publicly admitted guilt. The predominantly Tutsi clergy of Nyundo diocese were notable for suspending the celebration of eucharist, and the Hutu reformer and activist André Sibomana cancelled public sacraments such as baptism, confirmation and marriage while briefly serving as administrator of Kabgayi diocese. But in general the Catholic hierarchy proceeded after the genocide as if nothing had happened. Some missionaries and Hutu expatriate clergy went so far as to allege a double genocide, often in a spirit of 'equilibrisme', or what Denis describes as a 'balancing' of both sides (pp. 183, 287). Angered at the RPF's killings of three Catholic bishops in June 1994, papal nuncios also resisted any accommodation with the post-genocide government. In stark contrast, Presbyterian leaders repudiated their former leadership wholesale, and in December 1996 the *Église Presbyterienne Rwanda* (EPR) issued the first ecclesial statement of repentance for complicity in the genocide. In 1998–2000, the Catholic Church began to grapple more honestly with its own legacy, in part because church leaders agreed to make the upcoming 2000 jubilee not just a celebratory affair, but an opportunity to conduct a self-critical synod on ethnocentrism.

Denis's book culminates with a detailed study of the controversial role of the French White Father Gabriel Maindron in Congo-Nil, a parish near the western city of Kibuye. Maindron had been lionised in early French journalistic accounts for staying with his people throughout the genocide. What Denis convincingly shows, however, is that Maindron supported the arming of Hutu militias before the genocide, maintained close ties with local *génocidaires*, and failed to protect

Tutsi who took refuge with him. Convicted in *absentia* in 2012 of first-degree complicity in genocide, Maindron exemplified the moral failings of Catholic leadership during Rwanda's genocide. He may not have killed anyone himself, but 'he never took risks to save lives' (p. 272).

Denis's impressive historical research draws on archival sources from Rwanda, France and Belgium along with extensive analysis of newspapers, first-person written testimonies and French and English secondary literature. For all of this, however, Denis's book is not without gaps. The comparative study of the EPR is insightful, but more analysis of other Christian Churches such as Anglicans, Pentecostals and Adventists would have been welcome, especially given the title of the book. In standing so firmly against 'equilibrisme', Denis also has a persistent tendency to overlook or underplay RPF abuses during the civil war and immediately after the genocide. Typical here is his language that 'we do not know to what extent the higher echelons of command in the [RPF] army were able to control its subordinates on the ground; ultimately, it is not clear who bears responsibility for these abuses' (p. 102). This cuts against the grain of nearly all accounts of the RPF as a tightly disciplined, hierarchical organisation in which foot soldiers rarely acted without the direct knowledge and orders of their commanders. Denis also says little to nothing about Rwanda's military intervention in Congo in 1996–8 and the extensive retaliatory massacres of Hutu exiles. This was not 'double genocide', but it should be discussed in more detail, especially since it exerts such a strong influence on Hutu memory of the period. On this note, Denis could do more to explore the contested memories of the genocide, perhaps by drawing on the ninety-two oral interviews that he conducted.

Whatever its lacunae, *The genocide against the Tutsi and the Rwandan Churches* is an outstanding contribution to historiography on the Rwandan genocide and the single best English-language study of the Catholic dimensions of the 1994 genocide. It should become standard reading in the field.

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