

Prayer on 25th Anniversary of the start of the Rwandan Genocide

April 7, 2019 marks the 25th Anniversary of the start of the Rwandan Genocide. Between April 7 and the middle of July 1994, between 600,000 and 1,000,000 people were killed in Rwanda, many Tutsi, along with many Batwa.

PRAYER

God of compassion, you weep with those who weep, and you wept 25 years ago and you weep today, at the violence, at the inhumanity, at the callous disregard for lives that you had made. We weep with you, weeping over the loss of life that even now horrifies us.

God of mercy, have mercy on us, for we the people of The Presbyterian Church in Canada failed you and the people of Rwanda 25 years ago. We did not demand that our government act as our sisters and brothers keepers, we did not demand that the UN Peacekeepers be allowed to defend those threatened with death. For this we are sorry, and we repent.

We did not hold our sisters and brothers in the Church of Jesus Christ accountable for their actions in condoning, promoting and engaging in violence and murder. For this we are sorry, and we repent.

Teach us what it means to be our sisters and brothers keepers, help us to understand our responsibility in the protection of others.

God of healing, we marvel at the strength of the survivors of the genocide who have sought to begin life anew. This is only possible with your power, your healing, your grace. Pour out your Spirit's reconciling power on all who remember and are marked by the genocide.

We thank you for the ways in which Canada and the Canadian church have been blessed by the Rwandans who have come to this country; we pray they would be blessed as they seek reconciliation and hope.

As the world remembers, may we all with humility recognize our responsibility and with hope pray for, live towards, and commit ourselves to a world where words replace bullets, where acts of compassion replace the violence of machetes, and where humility replaces ethnic pride.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the great reconciler. Amen.

- The Rev. Peter Bush