



A Prayer on the 24th Anniversary of the Start of the Rwandan Genocide

On April 7, 1994 the Genocide in Rwanda began. Over the course of the next 100 days some 600,000 people were killed. The total number killed is estimated at 800,000. On this anniversary I think of those who fled the genocide and came to Canada, and who I now number among my colleagues and friends. Their stories move me, their desire for reconciliation challenges me, and their faith gives me hope.

A PRAYER:

God of mercy, on this the 24th anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide, we cry out in lament. We recoil, O God, from facing the atrocities human beings carried out against other human beings during the Genocide. We are ashamed that our fellow human beings would do such horrific things.

We confess, O God, to the shame of the people called by your Son's name, that during the Genocide, Christians were numbered among the perpetrators of the violence.

We confess, O God, that Canada along with the nations of the world, and the United Nations, failed to act to protect children, women, and men, failing to act for the well-being of fellow human beings.

We lament the lives lost, children, women and men, and the communities destroyed. We cry out on behalf of those injured and harmed, who bear the marks of the violence to this day. Bring healing to both those who were the recipients of violence and those who committed the violence, for the lives of both victims and perpetrators were scarred by the violence. We name before you Rwandans whose names we know – friends, colleagues, neighbours, acquaintances...

God of mercy, bring healing to the people of Rwanda, Burundi, Congo and other nations in the region impacted by the Genocide. By the reconciling power of your Son's cross, bring repentance and forgiveness, truth and reconciliation, so that honesty and grace may rule in the hearts and minds of leaders, communities, families, and individuals.

Thank you, God who cares for the refugee, for the Rwandans who have come to Canada, enriching the life of our country. Thank you for those Rwandans who have brought their faith and spiritual gifts into the life of the church in Canada, including The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We confess, O Lord, that we as individuals, as nations, and as a world community have been slow to learn the lessons of Rwanda. Give us insight to see where events are leading to the potential of such violence occurring. Give us the courage and hope that flow from your Son's Resurrection, to be agents of his peace and self-giving service.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who laid down his life that human beings might live. Amen.

—The Rev. Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 General Assembly