

Rwanda - The saving grace of intercession
April 7, 2009

Today marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide in which over one million innocent people were butchered in only 100 days. It was not the first Rwandan Genocide, another less famous one occurred in 1959. In the earlier one many people fled to neighboring nations especially Uganda.

The Rwandan Genocide followed the pattern of all genocides. It was perpetrated on a people by its own government once it had disarmed them so that they could not resist the assaults against them. The roots of the attacks were basically in Hutu vs. Tutsi rivalries, these being the two most populous tribal or ethnic groups in Rwanda. It might be hard to believe but the Hutu government supported murderers were in turn supported by the neighboring French speaking nations and discreetly by France itself. The Tutsis (remember the old song "Do the Wa-Tutsi"?) and moderate Hutus were the target. The Genocide was eventually stopped when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group composed mostly of Tutsi refugees, invaded and overthrew the Hutu government. The present President is currently elected, and formerly was part of the RPF which invaded and stopped the genocide. I was in the country at the time that President Kagame expelled the French ambassador and the French embassy for continuing to deny their part in the genocide.

I have been to the beautiful nation of Rwanda many times in the past years. It is called the "Land of a Thousand Hills". It is a little smaller than the Mid-Atlantic state of Maryland and currently has a population of about ten and a half million, making Rwanda the most densely populated nation in all of Africa. The people are wonderful and, although faced with many challenges, have a strong will to make their country a place of peace and prosperity. I can't say why what I am about to write is so, but as I travel around central and east Africa I have noticed that there is somewhat of an awe toward the Rwandans by the other Africans, and it seems that they are looking to the Rwandans to lead them in some way.

But there is more to this story. In the months previous to the Rwandan Genocide there were other world changing events going on in the continent of Africa in the nation of South Africa. With the end of Apartheid many were predicting a genocide in that nation, and there was ample proof that such a thing was in the planning. In fact many of the minority whites left the nation in preparation for such an event. But there was something else that was happening, and had been happening, in South Africa that was missing in Rwanda - Intercession. In fact there was much intercession being made for the nation and peoples of South Africa. There were some attacks, and many more were uncovered. We should give credit to those government officials who were calling for reconciliation rather than retribution. But the call for reconciliation was first heard in the heavenly realm through the many voices of intercession asking the Lord of Hosts to have mercy on the land. To be sure there were other factors in place in South Africa that were not in Rwanda. For instance, the people of South Africa had not been disarmed and prevented from protecting themselves. But this fact did not stop the

violence, it was the intercession.

There are those much more familiar with the situations in South Africa (where I also have spent considerable time) and Rwanda in the spring of 1994. From a spiritual perspective what a number of prophetic intercessors and leaders believe is that the spirit of murder and genocide was released in South Africa against the minority population. But because of the repentance and reconciliation and crying out by the people in intercession the spirits of death could not find a place to stage their horror in South Africa. So in searching for another place to host them they came to Rwanda and released their terror upon the land. Perhaps this can in part answer the question as to how did such a horror seemingly arise from nowhere and so completely devastate a people in such a short time.

What can we learn from this, and where do we go from here? The only true forgiveness is in Jesus Christ. When we follow His teachings to extend forgiveness and even do good to those who have done us evil in the past we can turn things around. Outside of Christ there is no hope, not for peace in Africa, not for peace in the Middle East, not for personal peace. But in Christ Jesus all things are possible, and all things are made new.

2 Cor 5:17-21 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”