



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The 15th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide was marked this weekend by a PBS program ([view the broadcast here](#)) highlighting the remarkable healing process taking place in the country under the leadership of Prison Fellowship Rwanda. *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* reminded viewers that well over one million innocent people, 1/8 of the population, were butchered in 100 days by their fellow countrymen. But 15 years after the killings, the country is experiencing a renewal.

Anglican Bishop John Rucyahana, member of the Board of Trustees of Prison Fellowship International (PFI), has been pivotal in steering the nation towards unity. In pursuit of national healing, PF Rwanda operates a reconciliation program, the Umuvumu Project, through the prisons and the communities emphasizing the importance of repentance and forgiveness.

Using a curriculum guide prepared by PFI, a facilitator leads the participants to consider concepts of responsibility, confession, repentance, forgiveness, amends and reconciliation. After extensive counseling, this faith-based program brings victims together with offenders. The depth of the victims' pain and suffering makes forgiveness appear unfathomable. But, many victims listen with surprise to the pain of the perpetrators. Bishop John tells of the offenders who can't sleep for seeing visions and hearing the cries of the people they hacked to death, the offenders who can't forgive themselves for the pain they have inflicted on others.

Over 40,000 offenders have experienced the PF Rwanda program of restorative justice. Many of them, with the guidance and assistance of PF Rwanda, are reaching out to the victims and building homes for their families. Presently, 4 reconciliation villages with 400 homes have been built. Individuals suffering such terrible pain and guilt have turned away from bitterness and opted for forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation.

Today, 15 years after one of the saddest moments of African history, Rwanda is looking to the future. Rwanda now has one of the fastest growing economies in Africa as well as one of the least corrupt governments. Bishop John says with conviction, "We cannot wait until we forget the genocide to build a nation." Under the leadership of PFI and PF Rwanda, the building has already started with a firm foundation of transformation and reconciliation. To read more about PFI's remarkable reconciliation efforts around the globe, visit www.pfi.org.

Prison Fellowship International (PFI) is the world's most extensive international criminal justice ministry. It is the global association of 112 national Prison Fellowship organizations, with more than 100,000 volunteers working for the spiritual, moral, social and physical well-being of prisoners, ex-prisoners, their families and victims of crime. PF Rwanda is one of these national ministries. PFI operates reconciliation programs similar to the Umuvumu Project, often called the Sycamore Tree Project®, in 22 countries.