



The Bishop of Rwanda: Finding Forgiveness Amidst a Pile of Bones

John Rucyahana, James Riordan, Rick Warren (Introduction)

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In 1994, as his country descended into the madness of genocide, Anglican Bishop John Rucyahana underwent the mind-numbing pain of having members of his church and family butchered. John refused to become a part of the systemic hatred. He founded the Sonrise orphanage and school for children orphaned in the genocide, and he now leads reconciliation efforts between his own Tutsi people, the victims of this horrific massacre, and the perpetrators, the Hutus. His remarkable story is one that demands to be told.

The Bishop of Rwanda: Finding Forgiveness Amidst a Pile of Bones Details

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Pattyrlfg says

Bishop John Rucyahana says "In 1994, at least 1,117,000 innocent people were massacred in a horrible genocide in Rwanda, my homeland in central Africa." He tells of the political background and a government that pushed men and women to kill their fellow countrymen, friends and neighbors. He tells of how Satan reigned in their minds and hearts for a time and the burden the guilty had to deal with later. It is his belief that the Rwandan people had not truly accepted Jesus, as the local churches boasted before the genocide. If they had "true Christianity," there would have been no genocide--"People who truly know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, undergo a transformation from within. The Holy Scriptures-not their hate and prejudices-guide them."

I feel Bishop Rucyahana's most important message is "Sometimes evil has its day because men have so overturned themselves to it. But even then, God does not abandon them. God awaits to perform a miracle." The Bishop and his fellow protestant leaders have come together to evangelize Rwanda and promote "true Christianity." They have worked very hard for true forgiveness and repentance so the Rwandan people can live life together again--"With god all things are possible."

This was a very informative book on a topic I knew very little about. I know there have been many genocides like this within African nations. It was helpful to read about the political background that led to it. I gave only 4 stars because I would have liked to have had the Bishop relate more details about the changes he has seen through his work and the work of the other protestant leaders.

Mary Kay says

A powerful recounting of John Rucyahana growing up amidst the horrific genocide in Rwanda, and how God used him from the refugee camps to later helping heal his country. It seems everywhere he went, John Rucyahana was used by God to impact people's lives.

This true story held me fast, taught me lessons, and enlarged my own dreams. The book is a gripping read and I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Those who are especially concerned about writing style may be a bit put off by the occasional repetition of some details in sections with differing purposes, and by shifts back and forth in time. But to me, those craft issues were minor blips to the unfolding of this incredibly moving and inspiring story.

Kavita Ginty says

This book is riveting. It is sad how the whole world stood by while this happened but the reconciliation that is occurring in Rwanda is amazing.

Connie says

After reading My Father, Maker of the Trees, How I Survived the Genocide in Rwanda; I wanted to learn more about what I had remembered vaguely, when it happened, and came to this book, the Bishop of Rwanda. The author gives a very detailed account of the history that set up the events for the genocide, as well as what happened during this horrendous slaughter. It is pretty graphic at times, and once again, it shocks me how evil men's deeds can be particularly when they join together. What follows this horror, however, is the amazing power of the Grace of God in taking something so horrible, and bringing hope and forgiveness into the hearts of those willing to allow Him in! People left to themselves become so controlled by Satan that they can commit unspeakable horrors. And people who give themselves to the Lordship of Jesus can bring unbelievable resurrection Life into such horror! This book greatly strengthens my faith in how God can take what was meant for evil, and transform it into Glory!

Marisa OConnor says

intense and emotional book. at times, I felt myself disconnecting because of the horrible things I was reading. but all totally worth the read. there is so much depth to Rwanda's genocide and equally so to its healing. not a light read but I highly recommend even to the feint of heart.

Kevin Holt says

Eye opening story about the brutal genocide that happened in Rwanda in 1994. Talks about what caused the genocide, the details of the government led slaughters, and the recovery.

Hard to believe that this could possibly happen, and it did. Also hard to believe that hardly anybody in the US knows about it.

Elise says

In this book Bishop John Ruchyahana, Bishop of the Anglican Church in Rwanda, shows how the Rwandans are learning to grieve their losses, forgive their neighbors who have killed their families, and find new ways to live that aren't based on fear, lack of education, and lies. The social structures are beginning to change. People are beginning to become educated in such a way there is our bishop. I have friends who have met this man and they are proof that what he writes is indeed happening. Read it to find hope for our world in spite of

wars and violence that is so widespread.

Karen says

This book painfully depicts the genocide of the Tutsis that was perpetrated by the Hutus in Rwanda beginning in 1994. The true story is even more horrendous than I knew. The genocide that occurred there excels Nazi Germany in barbarity and death rates. John Rucyahana is an Anglican Bishop in Rwanda and writes his account very well. The end is hopeful and describes how Rwanda has improved immensely in recent years, due to the country turning to God in ways that would make Americans blush because of the Rwandans' refreshing political incorrectness. Hurray for Rwanda today! I highly recommend this book.

Kathryn says

This book written by Anglican Bishop, John Rucyahana details what led up to, occurred during the after math and the healing due to the Rwandan genocide, which occurred in the early and mid-90s. In it about 1.1 million Rwandans, mainly those of Tutsi ethnicity were slaughtered. It is very eye-opening and the 1st half of the book is quite detailed about the atrocities committed. Like many Americans, I knew little of this except for what I saw in the movie, Hotel Rwanda.

Allison says

I thought based on the title that it would talk more about the church role/forgiveness after the Rwandan genocide. It did but it was for the last 2 chapters it felt like. However, this was a good book to read to understand more of the Rwandan genocide and the prior history of genocides in Rwanda before the big one in the 90s that we are more familiar with.

Katherine says

Good perspective on time of crisis and transition in third world country. Redundant at times

James says

First and foremost, **The Bishop of Rwanda** is a book about truth. It was written from the heart and soul of one who has witnessed mankind's most deplorable depravity and cruelty. Throughout the book one finds example after example of the brutal inhumanity of the Rwandan genocide of the mid-1990s. These are ugly, dark-souled truths. These are acts so sadistic and disturbing that one's heart and mind are challenged to accept them as truths. Yet, truths they are, and the evidence speaks for itself. Genocide is ugly and unspeakable. It is a truth that no one wishes to accept or acknowledge, but if Rwanda and the nations of the world are to move forward, the first thing that we must do is leave the relative safety of denial. We must accept the truth, and then we must do what is right.

Within the pages of this book, John Rucyahana and James Riordan show that truth is beautiful and uplifting. Even though this book is an indictment of the numerous failures of governments and individuals, it is also a gentle plea for forgiveness that drowns out any shouted demand for retribution. This book is an invitation for Tutsis and Hutus to find reconciliation without revenge. **The Bishop of Rwanda** is a chronicle of the long and arduous road to forgiveness upon which all Rwandans must travel: a road that must be taken, and a road that cannot be traveled alone. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi: “An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind.”

The survivors and the perpetrators of the genocide have been deeply affected by the horrors of those days of tumult, torture, rape, and mass murder. Because of the genocide, the perpetrators and their misguided followers must find the strength to admit their sin and ask for forgiveness. Because of the genocide, the survivors must gather the will and courage to forgive those who committed these unthinkable crimes against their neighbors. *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.* (Matthew 6:14-16, NIV)

Tyler Edwards, author of *Zombie Church: Breathing Life Back Into the Body of Christ*, reminds us, “The truth is, the Devil's job is easy.” One need only to look at what happened in Rwanda to know this is the case. Genocides have occurred far too often throughout history, and until the world comes to recognize the signs of this evil and resolves to prevent it, there will be more genocides. The Tutsis and Hutus of John Rucyahana's homeland have suffered through the anguish of genocide. Today, through understanding, forgiveness, cooperation, and faith, Rwanda stands facing a new dawn. True peace and prosperity have become very real possibilities as a direct result of repentance, forgiveness, and faith following the genocide in Rwanda. John Rucyahana's message of peace and forgiveness serves as a guiding light for not only Rwandans, but for all of mankind. *Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.* (Luke 6:37, NIV)

Finally, **The Bishop of Rwanda** is a testimony of hope and transformation. As Rwandan survivors of genocide learn to forgive those who committed these acts, the nation itself is transforming, a phoenix rising from the ashes of its own immolation. The hope for a true transformation in Rwanda is, perhaps, best summed up in the Bible: *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”* (Romans 12:2, NIV)

Some books offer profound wisdom. Some books leave a lasting impression. Some books guide mankind onto the right path. **The Bishop of Rwanda** does all three.

Frans says

I am giving this book 3-stars; usually I am always on a 4, mostly because for sometimes now all the books I read are chosen with a purpose. The 3-stars came about maybe because of my very inner bound preconceptions about religion and church, even though I have deduced from the Bishops' narratives that he is more about Jesus. Or because I had great expectation, I come to this book because I caught a glimpse of the fascinating story of John Rucyahana as it was told in *A Thousand Hills*. Nonetheless the Bishop gave me another perspective of Rwanda's story and I am grateful, maybe the story just needed a little flair in the way it was told (my opinion/expectation) . Note: I still cannot put into context that a human being can cut open a pregnant woman, remove an unborn fetus, kill it for the mother to see and hack the mother's head off (please explain you all?). There is really a thin line between being human and evil.

Azaria says

This is a poem I wrote by pulling words from this novel.

1,117,000 innocent people

Massacred

In Rwanda, my homeland

Buried in pits

Dumped in rivers

Chopped in pieces

Besides details of this very sad story,

my goal with this book

is to tell

an amazing uplifting story.

Nicholas Robison says

I had the pleasure of meeting Bishop Rucyahana a few years ago and was blown away by his character, humility, and passion. This book is excellent, not only is it a great overview of the history leading up to and fomenting the resulting genocide, but it places the human component front and center. These are real people, these are real stories. Their pain is real, it cannot be ignored.

This is not an easy book to read, for readers in the US or Europe our role in the violence cannot be avoided or passed over. The effects of colonization, greed, and defense of the status quo planted the seeds for genocide and refused to stop the violence once it began. But the story doesn't end there, the last half of the book tells the story of reconciliation, the story of forgiveness, and the desperate struggle to build anew. A story which began in violence now ends in grace and love, not through the efforts of man, but only through the redeeming power of Christ.

This book is highly, highly recommended.

Di says

An excellent book about the politics of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and how the world turned its back on Rwanda. It's fairly graphic, but the author writes with understanding and compassion, being a Rwandan man himself. He talks about how people in his country are reluctant to trust the clergy, as many clergypeople in 1994 were inciting and perpetrating the genocide. He talks about healing, trust, repentance and the presence of God in reconciling the ethnic groups, and how God is blessing Rwanda today. An excellent read and very insightful.

Stephen Hultquist says

Genocide. Even the word is evil. This book tells the story of that evil. Where it came from, how men were compelled to kill others for no reason other than someone told them they must.

It's deeply impacting, of course. More than that, though, is the warning that hangs over it. Can it happen again? Yes. Can we keep it from happening? Yes. But only if we act.

Todd says

Amazing story of reconciliation. I'm going to Rwanda this year and this is prerequisite reading for me
