

Charisma News – Outreach Helps Bring Healing, Reconciliation in Rwanda

Twelve years ago the genocide in Rwanda led to the deaths of more than 1 million Hutus and Tutsis in a three-month period. Today the African nation is still reeling from the devastation, and poverty is abundant. But an Anglican priest is working to help his homeland find healing through his REACH-Rwanda ministry, an acronym for Reconciliation, Evangelism and Christian Healing. Since 1997 Philbert Kalisa, who lost many of his family members in the genocide, has been leading a three-day seminar that teaches peace building, trauma healing and community development. After nine years of ministry, REACH has seen more than 1,300 Rwandans and 250 leaders complete the program and dozens of families restored. "Reconciliation requires that we are committed to setting all people free spiritually, emotionally, psychologically, socially and physically," Kalisa said. Agnes Mukagasana, 44, can attest to that freedom. Her husband and six children were killed in the genocide. But after attending the REACH seminars she says she can finally forgive. "I forgive everyone who killed my family," she said. "I forgive those who raped me and my daughter. I even forgive myself, and may God forgive me because I now realize that living with hate and anger damages me more and I have to forgive in order to be forgiven too." She now visits prisons where those convicted of crimes during the genocide are held, telling the inmates she forgives them and bringing them food.-**Felicia Mann**