

## Partnership visit to Rwanda from 27th November – 2nd December 2015

**Aims** – To meet with the senior leadership of Free Methodist Church Rwanda (FMCR)  
 To visit British Methodist mission partners serving in Rwanda  
 To meet SALT Scholarship recipients in Rwanda

I arrived at Kigali airport on Saturday 28 November and the following morning was the last day of the Kigali Free Methodist Church annual conference. It was a joy to participate in the singing, dancing and praise sessions. Various choirs sang – children’s choir, youth choir, women choir and others from different congregations. The children recited bible verses along with beautiful choreography to indigenous Rwandan worship songs. There was a warm welcome to all guests and the preacher at the Sunday service was from Congo. The subject was, *“The significance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church in the end time”*. The Methodist Cathedral at Gikondo was packed full with members and guests, newly ordained ministers as well as deacons who were recognised by the church. It was a great occasion.



Free Methodist Church Rwanda – Worship team



Free Methodist Church Rwanda – Kigali Conference

### Meeting with the Bishop Sam Kayinamura and Conference Secretary – Rev Jeremy Serugo

The next day I met with Bishop Sam and Jeremy to discuss partnership issues.

Leadership training – FMCR leaders were so grateful for the appreciable progress the church has witnessed since the start of partnerships between both Rwandan and British Methodist Conferences. Jeremy said the most significant changes were the exposure and confidence experienced by leaders through SALT training programmes. The leaders expressed the importance of capacity building and shared how the knowledge and skills were being passed on to church members. They conveyed their thanks to the SALT grant committee for the additional English language training that benefited the

students studying in Uganda and Kenya considering Rwanda was a French speaking country. There were other discussions on partnership issues:

1. Ministerial training – Bishop Sam thanked MCB for supporting the NMA five year programme in the past through which FMCR pastors and ministers were trained in Rwanda. Even though the scheme has ended, Isaac, the NMA recipient, who was responsible for ministerial training, is now being paid by the FMCR. This confirms the continued training of FMCR church leaders including laity. Isaac also manages the library at the office headquarters. FMCR now has a Theology department in its Polytechnic that it



Free Methodist Church Rwanda church leaders with Bunmi



plans to develop as one of its mission priorities. It is hopeful that these Masters graduates would lecture at this new department after successful completion of their studies under the SALT programme. Bishop Samuel also mentioned that the Free Methodist Church has started a new district in Kampala and there is increasing need to train more pastors and leaders for the growing church.

2. Group training – There was a request for group training for youths, women and children workers. Special arrangements could be made with Kenya Methodist University to work alongside Rwanda ministers in training its potential leaders and members. The Bishop will be in contact with me on this.
3. Seed corn projects - Jeremy asked for cross-cultural visits to other Methodist conferences. He said this would be helpful to experience and learn how colleagues were handling and combating drugs, addiction and unemployment issues among youths. The opportunity would also help explore income generating and entrepreneurial initiatives for Rwandan communities. MCB might be able to consider a pilot proposal for a seed corn project that the FMCR could take over eventually to ensure sustainability. Bishop Samuel will update me on this.



Jeremy– FMCR SALT student

- **Meeting with SALT students**

Jeremy is studying Theology and Development at Uganda Christian University. He has successfully completed the course work for the Masters programme and has started his research focusing on 'Compassion programme and FMCR for sustainability' – he is curious as to what happens in Rwanda when this aid ends. Jeremy appreciates how MCB helps with capacity building as this has boosted confidence and improved leadership quality at FMCR since our partnership was formalised in 2014. He hopes to continue to serve as one of the FMCR leaders as well as lecture at the polytechnic in future.

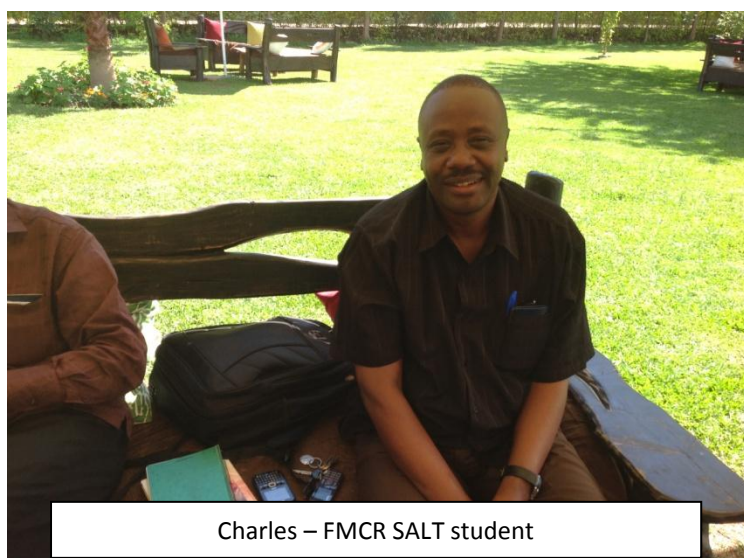
Alex is undertaking a Masters in Social Work and Administration and he also plans to complete his course work in December 2014 because he had some English Language studies at the start. He also attends the same Uganda Christian University and he commented on how broad social work was. Alex's research would focus on 'Divorce' – an increasingly rampant issue in Rwanda and he hopes to evaluate its impact on families with the view of starting a Marriage course and conflict management for the church. He mentioned the need for the church to also consider drug abuse rehabilitation especially among youth to help address



Alex– FMCR SALT student

conflicts in young families.

Charles is pursuing a Masters programme in Theology and Development with his research focusing on Christian education to alleviate poverty among youths and rural families. Rwanda being a very young nation, has many youths in the church and communities grappling with unemployment. The HIV rate appears to be on the increase and one of the ways of combating it is to engage youths in

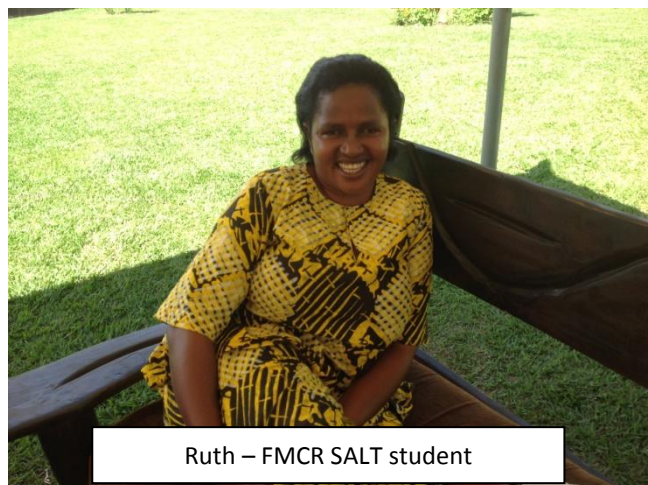


Charles – FMCR SALT student

meaningful activities. Charles plans to investigate volunteering and micro-credit within youths through co-operatives. Charles also attends the Uganda Christian University and was very appreciative of how much he has grown through exposure to another context apart from Rwanda in his studies.

Ruth is the only female Masters student and she is much celebrated as she had distinction in her courses at the Uganda Christian University. Her Masters programme is in Development and she plans to focus on 'Saving and Credit Association Among Rwanda Women' with the hope to address poverty by empowering women to contribute to household incomes and support sustainable development.

It was good to meet with all these students and what a difference a year makes. I met with them last year when they were a little apprehensive about studying in a different country and a different language. Now they were exuding confidence and look forward to positively influencing their communities and church members. They all plan to contribute to FMCR's vision locally and globally particularly as the church plans towards its 75 years celebration in 2017. The theme of the church is *go, search, bring, train and send* with the aim of doubling its size in ten years time. What a remarkable progress by the Rwandan Methodists!



Ruth – FMCR SALT student



Bunmi and FMRC minister interpreting during service

#### **Mattia and Elena Leoni and family – MCB mission partners**

It was an opportunity to meet the family in Kigali. Elena served as a Physiotherapist at Amizero Special Needs School and she also worked with carers of disabled children in the community whilst Mattia taught English language. Michele and Sam both attended local schools and enjoyed school. They are now rounding up their mission service at Kigali and should be on their way back to Ireland.

Thank you  
Dr Bunmi Olayisade  
Africa Partnership Coordinator