

## Partnership visit to Free Methodist Church Rwanda from 17<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**Aims** – To meet with the senior leadership of Free Methodist Church Rwanda (FMCR)  
 To visit Staff & Students of GSF – to see the renovated girls dormitory after fire outbreak  
 Explore FMCR training options with the Queen's Foundation  
 Explore People-to-People opportunities with FMC Rwanda  
 Attend Africa Biblical Leadership Initiative Conference

Glad to leave wet London, it had been raining continuously for many days and time to enjoy Africa sunshine or so I thought. My journey was early and smooth though I travelled all day and was in transit at Brussels for about an hour. I departed home at 5.00am and was glad to arrive at the Good News Guest house, Kigali at 8.30pm. Being late, there was not much food left but I had one of the best fruit salad ever. I knelt by my bed, thanked God for journey mercies, had a shower and slept like a baby. I was glad FMCR leaders picked me at the airport despite being arriving late. We start early tomorrow.

### Visit to Groupe Scolaire Frank Adamson de Kibogora (GSFAK)



*Science students outside girls' dormitory at GSFAK - Rwanda*

Two hundred and eighty two girls celebrating the rise of their new dormitory from ashes! What a wonderful atmosphere filled with chatting girls that refused to leave school despite their ordeal. GSFAK was started by Rev & Mrs Frank Adamson on 10 October 1969. They were American missionaries that had a vision to start a boarding school for boys. The girls joined later. GSFAK is now a highly reputable and popular institution in Rwanda. It is a Science School with 623 students, 29 teachers, 8 administrative staff and 21 support staff. Only five students were not day students, the rest were all boarders. It teaches both 'O' and 'A' level students and offers four combinations for tertiary education pursuit: Maths-Chemistry-Biology; Physics-Chemistry- Maths, Physics–Chemistry–Biology and Maths-Economics-Geography. It has beautiful scenery, with Lake Kivu as its backdrop. It is very competitive to gain admission into

the school, therefore students and staff strive to maintain its high performance standards.

I visited the newly renovated dormitory with new doors, new windows, a new corridor and an external wall. Steel braces replaced former wooden ones to support the new roof. New showers and toilets were fitted to accommodate the growing number of students. Unfortunately, this meant the £10,000 solidarity fund given by MC Britain finished the block work but not soft furnishings. In spite of this, the girls were so thankful to have a new residence and they all moved back together into the dormitory. Prior to this, they slept in the Storehouse and Chapel. FMCR leaders and GSFAK staff expressed sincere thanks for MCB coming to their rescue promptly without losing an academic year. Rwandan Methodists said thank you!

### Visit to Groupe Scolaire Frank Adamson de Kibogora (GSFAK).

Bishop Samuel welcomed me to Kibogora as we arrived in the afternoon. We travelled for five hours in the rain, however as you know rain is always considered a blessing in Africa. In the pouring rain, I quickly dropped my luggage at the Mission House and visited Groupe Scolaire Frank Adamson de Kibogora (GSFAK). Its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was on 10 October 2019 but diverted all its resources to renovating the fire-ravaged girls' dormitory. I toured the school, visited the library, laboratories, classes etc. with the Conference Secretary since the Bishop was tied up with Council meetings. We later visited the refurbished dormitory. We met a few of the girls outside the dormitory and some inside. Lighting was insufficient, but the pressing need was 70 girls sleeping on the floor.

Speaking with the Principal – Rev Leon Ukizebaraza, GSFAK welcomes Science and English teachers at the Secondary school. There 282 girls and 341 boys in the boarding school. I was so impressed with the 'A' level combinations on offer namely, - Maths – Chemistry – Biology (MCB), Physics – Chemistry – Biology (PCB), Physics – Chemistry – Maths (PCM) and Maths – Economics – Geography (MEG) . The school has won many academic awards, with 100% pass rate in 2018. Adversity does breed resilience.



*Bishop Kayinamura with FMCR Council member at Kibogora*

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

Below is the summary of discussions at the meeting with the Bishop and Conference Secretary of FMC Rwanda at Kibogora.

1. Debrief on MCB sabbatical placement – FMCR was very pleased to have had Deacon Stephen Roe and later his wife Angela, serve in Rwanda for about six weeks. Stephen stayed in Kigali for two days before coming to Kibogora where he served as a Hospital Chaplain as well as preached at the Cathedral. Sunday service attendance could rise to a thousand in number. Future people-to-people placements at Kibogora are welcome.
2. QF training proposal - FMC Rwanda is expecting Dr David Hewlett and Dr Gray Hall from Queen's Foundation to visit Rwanda to explore FMCR training needs.
3. Encounter Worldwide - There are opportunities to serve in FMCR Mission Hospital at Kibogora, to teach Nursing, English and Theology on short-term basis at Kibogora Polytechnic. Special skills and gap year students are

also welcome to serve at GSFAK School.

4. FMCR does not have a Child protection policy but wishes to consult with its Government Social services department and Compassion Rwanda and get back to me
5. FMRC is still twinning with Wolverhampton. Another twinning option is Wales (Stephen & Angela Roe)
6. FMCR has requested for support of ministerial training to meet urgently the new Rwanda government legislation. 80% of its members reside in the rural areas, hence advancing rural ministry is key to being a sustainable Conference.

### Sunday worship at FMCR Cathedral at Gikondo – Kigali

It was raining on Sunday morning again and I was glad I did not have to walk far. The guesthouse was close to the Cathedral. The liturgy was to start with prayers, then praise and worship. Four different choirs sang before the collection. Rev Alex read out the notices and invited me to bring greetings and preach the sermon. The Bible readings were 1 Corinthians 3: 1-9, 2 Samuel 2: 1-11 and 2 Samuel 5:1-3. The theme was unity and reconciliation as Rwanda remembers 25 years after the genocide. The sermon revealed the tribal division between the house of David and the house of Saul. Yet David reached out in good spirit despite Abner's divisive attitude. David was able to reconcile Israel together with a patient approach.



*Youths drama group during Sunday Service at FMC Cathedral*

### Meeting with ex-SALT Rwanda students

It was nice to meet four beneficiaries of MCB scholarships. I wanted to hear how their studies were enriching the FMC Rwanda. All of them communicated well in English and it was a meeting filled with aspirations to serve the church and communities to extend God's kingdom.



*Ex-SALT students at Kigali – Jeremy, Bunmi, Rachael, Alex & Charles*

Jeremy – Masters in Sustainable Development

- a. Trains FMCR pastors in theology and development every two months. As the Conference Secretary, he requested urgent assistance to help the pastors attain the minimum standard of Bachelor's degree or they may close down their churches.
- b. Also wishes to develop a Conference wide antidrug awareness campaign. I referred FMCR to WSCF Kenya.
- c. Mentioned protecting vulnerable youths from human trafficking – Referred to AACC.
- d. Exploring government empowerment programmes with entrepreneurial training for youths and women. Encouraged to request SALT group training for empowerment and entrepreneurship in 2020.

- e. Asked for leadership training delivered by AACC on Church sustainability, Conflict management, Peace studies, Project management.
- f. FMCR to identify candidate for 2020 Asia Rural Institute applicant to help coordinate their rural projects and peace initiatives.

#### Rachel – Masters in Theology and Development Studies

- a. Rachel has been unable to defend her dissertation scheduled for July 2019 in Uganda. This is because the border between both countries remains closed. She shall keep me posted
- b. Rachel coordinates 1,040 groups within the FMCR Conference. It offers a value of RF400m worth of investments among all group members. Muslims (with their households) join the groups after receiving Jesus as Saviour. Rachel reported many testimonies of reduced conflicts within families as school fees were being paid on time plus less dependence on one source of income. The Church also benefits from increasing membership through encounters with Jesus.
- c. FMCR Women Fellowship wishes to develop a hospitality business where tourism is booming in Rwanda. Many tourists visit to see the baboons and volcanoes. I advised it should develop its business plan and seek a soft loan or support.
- d. Rachel mentioned existing challenges with the increasing number of single (unmarried) mothers in the church and surrounding communities.
- e. Annual action plans – The Women’s Fellowship plans to visit prisons and hospitals in Rwanda. The group seeks methods to reduce seasonal diseases related to the rainy season within communities, as well as address erosion through awareness.

#### Alex – Masters in Theology and Social Sciences

- a. He started a Campus fellowship to disciple students on Campus. Alex is looking for ways to promote drug awareness of local substance abuse (made from fermented banana and maize). He reported that youths in churches and the communities now encounter increased drug related challenges. Perhaps lack of employment among youths is contributing to drug use. Alex asked for ideas of how to raise ‘seed corn’ to engage their brilliance and energy
- b. Alex also noticed a steady increase in divorce rates in Kigali over the past three years. He thought there were various causes such as - poverty, conflicts, drug use, increased awareness among women etc. Divorce data showed 21 cases in 2017, 69 cases in 2018 and 1,311 cases in 2019. The church is considering proactive activities to address the situation.

#### Charles – Masters in Youth Studies

- a. Lectures at a higher institution in Kigali as and when possible
- b. Started a group of 30 youths exploring youth alleviation initiatives
- c. Gather and periodically meet with a group of young motor cyclists in the community to promote safety awareness. The group members coordinate credit loan arrangements for their transport business
- d. His Church women group meets weekly. Each contribute RF 100 each week for members in need of capital to borrow and pay with small interest
- e. Charles started a Bible school (with applied development studies) for 35 students

## Attended African Biblical Leadership Initiative (ABLI) at Kigali – Rwanda

Day 1 - More than 25 African countries attended the three-day ABLI event, 23 – 25 October 2019. The theme was, “From Trauma to Triumph, synergizing leadership for healing and harmony”. Bishop Nathan Gasatura (Chair of Bible



Society Rwanda Board) described Nehemiah as a visionary leader, a team player, a resource mobiliser and a caring leader. When the king asked Nehemiah what he wanted in Nehemiah Chapter 2, he was ready. He designed a solution package after asking God for inspiration. He encouraged African Leaders to emulate Nehemiah. Archbishop Kambanda in his address shared about the power of forgiveness. He encouraged the Church to be the Salt and Light as it fights corruption. It should continue to highlight the good of Africa in addition to pursuing ways to invest in Africa’s human capital especially the youths. Dr Samuel Kobia, the former Gen Sec of World Council of Churches, spoke of how Africa experienced both highest and lowest moments in 1994. When Nelson Mandela was elected in South Africa, the genocide was taking place in Rwanda. President Kagame’s insightful leadership has promoted solidarity and unity as he picked up his country from ashes towards courageous progress. The work continues.

Day 2 - Ndidi Nwuneli, a Nigerian Christian entrepreneur, encouraged churches in Africa to unite and effectively leverage their assets to assist the disillusioned African youths. The Church should mobilise its army of volunteers to serve its communities, endorse use of church buildings for elementary and vocational training to boost education and alleviate poverty. Prof Jerry Gana explained that the heart of man is wicked and can perpetuate a culture of cruelty but for Jesus. He encouraged leaders to be transformers, building a culture of love and compassion with integrity. They should be strategic in thinking, courageous, competent and decisive. Prof Shyaka offered a social perspective of leaders stabilizing Africa and cementing its dignity in its players i.e. the *State, Church and Society*. By focusing on supporting families and Christian values, we can effect change. The Courts uphold justice, the Civil Societies advance social healing and the Church stimulate political and spiritual healing. African leaders ought to stimulate home-grown solutions that enhances resilience and boosts inclusive political government.

Day 3 - Dr Girma Mohammed shared tips for effective mentoring that builds authentic relationships e.g. love unconditionally, listen emphatically, embrace the spirit of succession and demonstrate godly values of how we live. He explained that storytelling involves constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing. Nonetheless, stories should be shared with integrity to avoid sharing toxic messages that perpetuates hurt and disunity. Several speakers described how the second generation of Rwandees were experiencing an identity crisis and how best to promote trauma healing. Rev Koudoha during devotions shared from Job 42:7-9. He said all will encounter three phases in life - life before trauma, experience trauma and life after trauma like Job did. Through it all, we should embrace three principles – Pray for our offenders. Forgive them and overlook their offences. Prof Elisee listed pitfalls to peaceful co-existence in various stories in the Bible and said like Cain, our actions are determined by our intentions. Community only exists when we live together. On the last day, Dr Kobia spoke about re-imagining Africa to enjoy peace, healing

and reconstruction, forgiveness, liberation of creation care and hope as we consciously make plan towards these. We pray and hope likewise in Jesus' name.



*Bunmi with Prof. Shyaka of Rwanda. Behind are Prof Gana of Nigeria with Rwanda PM*

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