

Partnership visit to Free Methodist Church, Rwanda 20th - 24th September 2017

Aims

- To meet with FM Church leaders to discuss partnership issues
- To meet with current and ex- SALT students to assess impact of training
- To visit Amizero Special Needs School, FMC in Kigali
- To visit FMC Mission Hospital and Polytechnic at Kibogora
- To meet with NMA recipients
- To update partner on changes to MCB grant processes

It was an early start as usual. I left home at 04.45am only to encounter delays at various airports☺. My delayed flight meant a reschedule of flights to Kigali hence I reached Rwanda at 02.00hours. It was humbling to have two senior church members waiting at the airport for me. I was brought to my guesthouse and eventually got into bed at 3.00am. Unbeknown to me, Rwanda was an hour behind Kenya but I had readjusted my time when I landed at Nairobi airport before departing for Kigali. As a result I got up an hour earlier the following morning to check out on time before our meeting meaning I slept for three hours due to different time zones, interesting.

Well my first visit was to Amizero Special Needs School on the church premises. It has been the only Special Needs School in Rwanda and a mission priority for FMC. I was accompanied by Bishop Samuel to meet the excited pupils and staff. We sang two Methodist hymns plus a chorus after which one of the pupils prayed. It was like a short school assembly where I shared the purpose of my visit and what a great opportunity to meet them. We exchanged greetings and was asked if another MCB mission personnel was coming to replace Elena Leoni who was very popular and loved by the kids and staff. I made no promise but said MCB would try its best. We visited them in their classes afterwards after which each pupil had a cup of milk with a snack courtesy of an international NGO (operating in Rwanda) for break. Bishop Samuel shared his concern about the sustainability its provision. He would prefer Amizero had its own farm to raise vegetables and animals for milk but needed funding. The farm would also double up as a demonstration farm for the pupils and parents to teach the importance of eating balanced diets. He would be grateful for assistance from MCB.



Amizero Special Needs pupils on school grounds



Free Methodist Church Kibogora;
1942 - 2017

Later I accompanied FMCR superintendents with Board members in two vehicles embarking on a five hour road journey to Kibogora where we met the disbanded FMC celebration committee members. The church had a very successful 75th Church Anniversary in August 2017 as a result FMC Church leaders were visiting to thank them for their dedication. FMC Rwanda had guests from Britain, America, Congo and Uganda with MCB represented by a team of Wolverhampton Methodists. The evening gathering went well and we were treated to a lovely meal after pleasantries. I was given an opportunity to bring greetings from MCB. I went to bed exhausted and happy.

Kibogora Methodist Hospital visit

Kibogora Methodist Hospital was built many years ago by early Methodist missionaries from Burundi. They later spread Methodism to Congo. The hospital was built near the Mission quarters for medical and allied professionals. Medics come from Britain, America, Canada as well as Congo. With KMH located at South Western Rwanda, one can see Congo across Lake Kivu. In spite of the beautiful and tranquil rural location, many Rwandan doctors prefer to reside nearer the city. As a result out of fourteen doctors working at the hospital, only three were Rwandan, others were mostly Congolese with short term serving experts.



KMH is the largest in this region with few health centres

scattered in the community. The ambulance sometimes pick up patients living two hours' drive away by road. The untarred roads could be quite treacherous in the rainy season however it was good to know the ambulance service was operational. The maternity and surgical wards were the oldest building and in need of expansion therefore the



Recently built Paediatric Ward at Kibogora Methodist Hospital

hospital had a mix of older and new buildings to meet demand e.g. the Paediatric ward was newly built plus the two floored building funded by the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District currently used as Pharmacy and Isolation units (enteritis) . In addition, new units namely Dentistry, Laboratory, Counselling unit for abuse patients on the hospital premises were still being constructed by the Rwanda government. Other wards on site were Outpatient, Emergency, Radiology, Internal Medicine, Physiotherapy, Neonatal, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Ophthalmology, Mental and Community Health. There were also administrative and record offices in addition to a mini-chapel for daily morning gathering for 20 minutes.

KMH is a pleasantly clean rural hospital delivering essential health services. It seeks both short and long term medics interested in Tropical Medicine and

welcomes volunteers, gap year students under MCB Encounter Programme managed by the World Church Relationships Office. KMH staff are bilingual and friendly, using both French and English to communicate.

Kibogora Polytechnic visit

This use to be a Teacher Training institute but was upgraded to a Polytechnic in 2012. It is a beautiful and quaint establishment with the backdrop of Lake Kivu, offering a peaceful and tranquil setting. Since inception KP has had 528 graduates and 840 enrolled students in 2017. It has two campuses, seventeen classrooms, two main halls, one ICT laboratory, two libraries, sixteen administrative officers, twenty full time teachers and eight part timers of which eight staff were pursuing PhD programmes and five pursuing Masters programmes. KP offers courses in

1. Health Sciences – Biomedical laboratory, General Nursing and Midwifery.
2. Business and Development Studies – Economic & management and Rural Development.



Block of classrooms and library at Kibogora Polytechnic

3. Languages –English, French, Swahili and Kiyarwanda
4. Postgraduate diploma in Education, Geography-History
5. Tourism and Hospitality
6. Theology were courses delivered at the institute.

It welcomes volunteers, lecturers on sabbatical and professionals willing to teach for short or long terms. Its school year starts in October and runs for four quarters ending in September the following year. Dr Mukamusi Dariya was initially the Deputy Vice Chancellor and recently appointed as the Vice Chancellor. Dr Dariya was glad about the recent appointment and asked for prayers knowing there were challenges ahead. She shared how KP students were struggling to accessing finance for courses as a result she was focused to seeks ways to raise scholarship funds for very gifted students from poor backgrounds. So help her God!

Meeting with FMCR National in Mission Appointees

- **Marie-Claire Mutuyimana – Community Development Manager**

Marie started this programme in 2014 and has since trained many pastors, church leaders and field co-ordinators in optimising the use of landed assets to generate income as well as prevent land encroachment. People from the same community were encouraged to form small groups called IKIMINA. They put money together to finance small projects or lend each other for emergencies such as payment of school fees, unexpected hospital bills etc. The group members were also encouraged to add a spiritual element to their meeting so they could pray and visit one another thereby strengthen their relationships. Marie’s other achievements were reclaiming church land titles. 426 church land titles have so far reclaimed for FMCR since after the genocide and Marie is still pursuing 321 land titles.



Marie – NMA Community Development Manager

Church members also come together to plant tea, pineapple and orchards. Profits from sales were shared between churches and members thereby providing employment and income particularly in rural dwellings. FMC has therefore developed guidelines for land management to protect church land from squatters and to lease these lands to surrounded communities to provide food for poor families. Till date 40 women and 250 pastors have participated. Job well done!

- **Seth Hagenimana – Health Care Trainer**

Seth’s goal was to promote positive behavioural change in hygiene and sanitation in rural places. He started his job in 2017 and has made remarkable progress so far. He is a trained nurse who specialised in Public health and his main objective has been to promote good hygiene and sanitation within communities. He has trained 290 pastors, 290 lay delegates and 102 local leaders. As a result, Karengera Health Centre in collaboration with Nyabinaga Parish built 20 latrines and a shower for the less privilege families in their community this year especially providing latrine and a shower to a disabled senior citizen to support independent living.



Seth – NMA Health Care Trainer

Seth had written a training manual and distributed among church leaders. A church member from each parish became a trainer to train new church members, monitor uptake and send progress reports to Seth. He then visits churches randomly to monitor implementation and assess impact. So far Seth also identified few challenges that needed attention. Some communities do not have portable water supply. There were poor families that could not afford to build toilets, basins or purchase soap. In addition few institutions do not have hand washing basins and were unable to provide the basic. I gave few suggestions in the presence of the Church Secretary – Jeremie. He took notes and would feedback to the Connexion Office at Kigali. It was a great and encouraging to meet both NMA recipients and hear about their work. The next day I was to meet with FMC SALT grant recipients

Meet with FMC scholarship recipients

In 2014, MCB Scholarship And Leadership Training (SALT) grant panel kindly approved scholarships for five FMC leaders plus another two in 2015. Two have since graduated, few are about to submit their thesis and two hope to start their research topics in 2018 academic year. It was very encouraging for FMCR to arrange for all SALT students to travel to Kibogora to meet with me. In addition each participant was asked to submit a brief paper (two A4 pages) about the course, institution attended, research topic and post-graduate action plan. We started the session at about 8.30am immediately after breakfast. Dr Ben and myself listened and were to critique each presentation. Dr Ben was a member of the Church Board



FMC SALT grant recipients with Bunmi at Kibogora

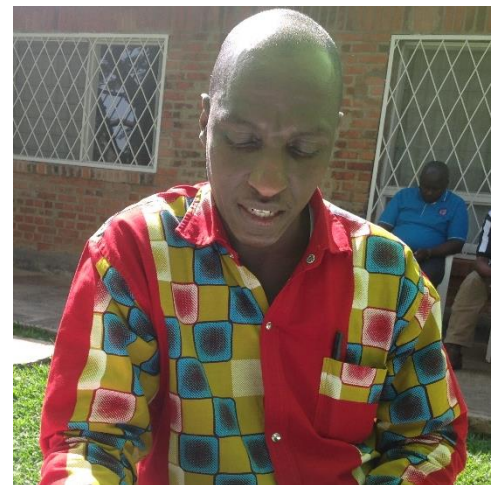
who was a trained lawyer PhD in Economics from Switzerland University. He was the current National Director of Investments for Rwanda and a Methodist. It was fun to have each SALT student defend his or her thesis in the presence of colleagues and well-wishers. They all joked about how their improved English language since inception! They were full of confidence, passionate about their subjects and excited about contributing positively to their parishes and communities. Please find below a summary of their presentations:

- **Pastor Casimir Mushimiyimana**

A student of Africa International University, Karen –Nairobi, Kenya. He is pursuing a Masters in (Church) Education and has completed eight modules with special interest in ecclesiastic service. He hopes to promote effective Church leadership, Christian education and enhance evangelism for church growth. He has started training youths in evangelism. His course commenced in 2016 but considers moving to Uganda University due to challenges with border securities because he has to cross three countries border checkpoints when traveling to and from Kenya by road. He continues to work on his English and is doing very well.

- **Reverend Abraham Ndaye Rugenerwa**

Abraham is currently the superintendent of Butare Annual Conference and is pursuing a Masters in Leadership and Administration. He has completed fourteen modules with focus on human resources, developing strategic plans and organisational policies. He said the training has transformed him into a motivated and visionary leader both spiritually and mentally. He wishes to help train church members, preachers and pastors in church management and encourage transformational leadership. He hopes to help manage church resources efficiently. FMCR promises to assist in translating his aspirations into action plans. He also wishes to move from Kenya to Uganda because of border security reasons.



Pastor Casimir



Rachael – Leader of Women Methodists

• **Mrs Rachel Mukamudenge – Leader of Free Methodist Women Fellowship**

Rachel was the only female in the group and had very high scores in all her courses. She focused on poverty alleviation especially among rural women and her Masters was in Community Development. Rachel started her course in 2014 and had few months of English language study which paid off immensely. Her research was *‘The contributions of Saving and Credit Associations on the socio-economic development using Termbere Group - Rushashi Sector as a case study’*. Rachel was interested in how women survivors of the genocide overcame challenges of unemployment and poverty by developing new skills that improved their socio-economic status. Many of the women became heads of households after the genocide and became responsible for their families even though many had limited resources. Hope International offered skills in livestock farming, vegetable farming, crafts and other small business ventures as well as the construction of houses for affected families. Rachel research revealed how the church

could use this approach as a tool for improving wellbeing of members, spreading the good news, reconciling Rwandans, improving socio-economic status of community members that should benefit the church through increased giving by church members. Rachel hopes she can inspire women to seek ways to improve living standards in Rwanda – a very worthy cause! Rachel has completed her courses however she is scrutinizing her thesis before final submission and then hopefully graduate from Christian University Uganda in 2017.

• **Reverend Seth B Semabarabara – Superintendent of Ruhengeri Annual Conference**

Seth is a superintendent pursuing a Masters in Systematic Theology at Uganda Christian University. He has completed eight courses with high grades and was now focusing on Ecclesiology for his research. His topic is *‘The role of Free Methodist Church in Rwanda in promoting “Ubunwe” (unity) among Christians in Rwandan society post genocide’*. He has started collecting and collating data and hope to complete by December 2017. This has been a very relevant course in promoting healing and reconciliation in word and deed.



Rev Seth - Superintendent

• **Reverend Alexandre N Ruganzu**

Alex has completed his Masters in Social work at Bishop Balaam University, Uganda (2014 – 2017). Many of the students had few months of English language study before commencing their postgraduate courses. Alex’s topic was *‘Impact of divorce on the well-being of the family especially children as well as churches’*. His aim was to help families, facilitate conflict resolution, improve communication and build strong families. As a senior pastor of his church, he encountered drug abuse among youths and divorcees. He also noticed there were no FMC policies to support divorced families. His vision is to start a family building ministry that addresses drug abuse, engage male youths in hair cut saloons and shoe repairs. Equip young adults and counsel families as well as offer Pastors’ wellbeing program. A very worthy cause that requires funding.



Rev Alex – Circuit minister

- **Reverend Simeon Mushimiyimana – Superintendent of Annual Conference and Chaplain at Kibogora Polytechnic**

Simeon started in 2015 and received news the previous day before presenting that his thesis has been approved and plans to graduate in October 2017. He pursued his Master of Theology at St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya. He completed twelve modules with focus on Pastoral theology and counselling. His passion is to accompany people in their complexities and multiplicities. His research topic was *'An investigation on modes of family functioning, pastoral care and counselling: A case study of Free Methodist Church families in Kibogora Parish, Rwanda'*. His aspirations for the future are to train pastors in counselling, offer pastoral care to parishioners, teach psychological counselling at the Kibogora Polytechnic, offer counselling and guidance to Kibogora Polytechnic students, conduct further research on family cohesion to provide appropriate family therapy and provide support to those showing post traumatic distress as a result of the genocide. Great vision!



Rev Simeon – Chaplain

- **Reverend Charles Munyamahoro – Pastor of FMC, Kicukiro District, Rwanda**



Rev Charles – Circuit minister

Charles graduated from Uganda Christian University in 2017 and has obtained a Master in Theology and Development. His research topic was *'Christian Education for poverty reduction among youths of the Free Methodist Church of Kicukiro District, Rwanda'*. Charles shared that young people often consider gaining skills as the sole means of solving poverty however many lack skills and knowledge of how to access physical assets, develop economic mind-sets or secure collateral for business. In addition most formal microfinance institutions charge exorbitant interest rates impeding access to good nutrition, shelter and health services. His findings focused on how Christian education could improve self-reliance and economic empowerment. Also to clarify theological approaches of God's work in a holistic way using Christian education programme. He noted that causes of poverty in Rwanda were many – genocide, misunderstanding of the Bible, ignorance, illiteracy, lack of employment, population explosion, lack of arable land etc. Hence

effects were multidimensional manifesting as – homelessness, drug abuse, laziness, dependency, premature sexual experience, migration, family conflicts, divorce, disease such as HIV/AIDs to mention a few. His recommendation was the start of a Youth Christian Centre for spiritual, mental, physical and socio-economic training through Bible studies, vocational training, entrepreneurship and economic development.

- **Reverend Jeremie S Serugo – FM Church Secretary**

Jeremie graduated from Uganda Christian University in 2017 and obtained Master in Theology and Development at Uganda Christian University. He shared how many misinterpreted Matthew 6:34 and live for today hoping tomorrow would take care of itself. His research focused on Partnership of churches with Compassion and Sustainable development. Since completing his programme, he has conducted several training on sustainability and self-reliance with the view of promoting sustainable development in Rwanda. Wonderful!



Rev Jeremie – FMCR Conference Secretary



FMCR Drama team during Sunday worship service

Worship at FMC Cathedral

I always look forward to attending church services on Sundays and this was no exception. I was ready by 9.00am and the service started at 9.30am after prayers in the vestry. Well on this occasion there was no robing so we just walked into the main Cathedral when the worship leader was about to start the service. Madame Esther was leading the service and a young male pastor was preaching. After the opening prayer and two hymns, lovely choruses were sang for up to thirty minutes. Then various choirs came up to present with the church singing along starting with Sunday school kids, then the Women choir, the youth and the drama team. Exuberant dancing and singing filled the air and it was great to see young ones making joyful noises to the Lord and free to worship Him in spirit and truth. This session was followed by three testimonies one of which was

about a boy in coma at the hospital for eight days and later recovered after persistent prayers – what a might God we serve! There was time for offering, intercessory prayers and finally the sermon which was taken from John 8: 13 – The truth you know shall set you free... Over three hundred people were in attendance and I was offered the opportunity to bring greetings from MCB. It was incredible partaking in worship with other Methodists. Thank you Lord!

Exodus 18: ²¹ Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Thank you
Dr Bunmi Olayisade
Africa Partnership Coordinator –MCB
October 2017