

Rwanda Direct Newsletter

Summer 2023



Dear friends of Rwanda Direct,

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

This summer edition of the Rwanda Direct newsletter will focus on the primary issue currently facing the Church: the government requirement for all ordained pastors to have a degree level qualification. Unless a longer transition period is agreed between the government and the various denominational leaderships, this will come into force next month – August.

The reasons for this government requirement are understandable. In recent months there has been news of ghastly church leadership in both Uganda and Kenya which has cost people's lives. Whilst nothing so drastic has been reported in Rwanda there have been reports of dangerous teachings that promise much but deliver nothing, or of some pastors exploiting giving for their own personal gain and other challenges to God's church. Generally, the Anglican Church has been free from the worst excesses as the pastors have had some training, and the supervision through the senior staff and bishops acts as a brake. Indeed, the Bishops want their clergy fully trained to the right level: it's the speed of the transition that is truly testing.

Unless there is a change, most of the clergy will no longer be allowed to lead parishes. Some senior leaders, such as Archdeacons, may have to serve under newly qualified clergy effectively at evangelist/catechist level, unless the dioceses can find a way through these difficulties. That is why, in collaboration with the Bishops in Rwanda, Rwanda Direct is concentrating its giving on Theological Education this year and we would like to do more! Could you help us so that we can help increase the number of graduate clergy over the next few years?

EAST AFRICAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE (EACC)

As we have reported before the Church has been rapidly growing the East African Christian College. It now has a growing number of courses in Theology and other courses starting in disciplines such as Nursing, Midwifery, Business Studies and Child Development.



The new Chapel and classrooms at EACC

BYUMBA

Byumba is a challenging diocese due to the poverty in that area. Bishop Emmanuel Ngendahayo has had a very difficult time there, first the loss of a wonderful leader and Bible College Principal and Pastor, Phinehas, over 10 years ago. Then the tragic loss of his own wife Victoire who was so dynamic and drove the Hannah Ministry forward and gave him such great support. Then through Covid, there was no income at all, and all staff lost their income. To top it all, he had a terrible car accident late last year (see previous newsletters). He had whiplash and continuing pain. Since then, he has been reliant on expensive hired vehicles to get around; money the diocese cannot afford but vital for his ministry.

Now some great news! Bishop Emmanuel is getting married to Mukeshimana Justine, a Christian widow who lost her husband a number of years ago. Their wedding will take place on the 5th August. Rwanda Direct has also been asked by the Bishop to send support we had allocated for a replacement car. We are able to send £3000 which with other agencies gifts, will at least secure the car. However, they will still need to find the other two thirds of the price! Please pray that this can be done.

GAHINI DIOCESE

Bishop Manasseh has thankfully recovered from his stomach issues and is firing on all cylinders again, for which he is very thankful. They are preparing for a big summer conference and expecting 8000 people to attend! God seems to be working in Gahini Diocese!

To help their primary needs, we have sent £2000 to help train more graduates on the post graduate studies in theology route to ordination at EACC, the quickest way to build up the graduate pastorate. We have also sent on £1000 specified gift through Rwanda Direct for the Bishops Discretionary Fund.

KIGEME DIOCESE

Following Bishop Assiel's prayer requests reported in the last newsletter, we were able to send £2000 towards theological training in Kigeme Diocese. Bishop Assiel will decide how to use it, either for pastors or catechists training. Both are high priority.

KIGALI DIOCESE

The Missionary Archdeaconry of Rusiga to the north of Kigali has been growing very fast indeed. Here is what Missionary Archdeacon Alphonse says:-

'We started Rusiga Archdeaconry with 4 parishes which were: 1- Kanyinya 2- Nkoto 3-Ngazo and 4- Ruganda. Currently, we have 8 parishes which are: the above and Mbirima Missionary, Rutenderi Missionary, Rusiga Missionary and Kabangu Missionary parishes. In these 8 the well-constructed and finished parishes are Nkoto and Ruganda and Kabangu. We are now embarking on Rusiga Kirenge church building which is at the window level. The government granted a permit for its construction and completion.

Among the 15 churches (some chapels, Ed) we have 8 working and the rest are not ready to be open because they are not finished. Currently Kanyinya Christians are using the classrooms of Kanyinya Vocational school. We had started to build the Archdeacons' house but unfortunately it collapsed and we are starting from scratch to build this house that will be a connecting point for the Archdeaconry. The Archdeaconry has 7 pastors and one Leader.



Ruganda parish opened on 18/12/2022

The renovation of the Rutendeli shelter which was damaged by a disaster is now progressing to the completion stage with improved ceiling and painting. We have started the construction of the Nganzo Parish shelter which is at the finishing level too.

Current status

We are still in the church planting stage and doing evangelism to increase the number of Christians and encourage more people to come to church. We are currently very few and we don't have enough support for Pastors in terms of offerings. The Diocesan administration has started helping pastors to get milk and manure by providing cows to the Pastors. So far Pastors have received cows.'

This growth has occurred in less than 5 years, and through the crisis of Covid. Oh that we could see such resourcefulness and growth here in the UK!

RWANDA DIRECT SUPPORT

Rwanda Direct doesn't ever intend to build up reserves in the UK so we currently cannot help any more than we have already done this year. Our three core aims (as defined by the Bishops) have received the following support:-

- Theological Training (EACC, Kigeme and Gahini) £9000
- Evangelism (Scripture Union and Kigali Missionary Archdeaconry) £4500
- Other support (Byumba car, Hannah Ministry, Gahini Bishop's Fund) £6000

To give further support for training we need more income. It doesn't sound very exciting, but theological training is transformational in God's Church in Rwanda!

VISIT FEBRUARY 2024

We are again planning a visit and would like to invite others to come and see what God is doing in Rwanda. If you are interested, please get in touch through the links below!

PLEASE PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE IN RWANDA AND FOR RWANDA DIRECT!

- That the churches can train adequate pastors to degree level
- As we seek continue to seek God's future for Rwanda Direct
- Praise God for the way EACC has developed. The vision has come of age! Pray for those studying there that they may grow in the wisdom and knowledge of Christ and lead His Church in growth and maturity.
- Pray for Bishop Emmanuel, more finance to replace the car and blessing on his marriage.
- Praise God for the transformation in Gahini Diocese and the enthusiasm for the Gospel, particularly the great convention in August
- For catechists training in Kigeme Diocese.

Do join with us on our **Zoom prayer meetings** most 1st Friday evenings of the month at 8.00p.m. Barbara Willingham will send you the Zoom details and dates, once you have told us you are interested! Contact details below.

Newsletter Circulation – Spread the News Further!

If you know of others who may be interested in helping the Church in Rwanda, do share this Newsletter with them and suggest they get in contact with us as below.

All data is stored with due regard to GDPR legislation, so we will not share contact details with anyone without permission.

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