



Who? Ken & Wendy Derksen

Wendy is a Certified Management Accountant, and is engaged in financial training and administrative management. Ken consults with the African Association of Baptist Churches (AEBR) with a particular focus on providing support for community development projects and acting as a resource in facilities management.

When? The Derksens joined Canadian Baptist Ministries Global Field Staff in 2014.

Where? They are working in Rwanda, primarily on capacity building with CBM's partner, the Association of Baptist Churches of Rwanda (AEBR).

What? Their focus has been on building relationships and trust, and as people become more comfortable with them, they have been privileged to hear their stories. They have begun their work with an attitude of, "Where do you think the AEBR needs assistance and how can we partner with you?" It became clear that the AEBR needs support in the community development department. The AEBR has a strong team of dedicated individuals, who manage eleven community development and theological education programs that are making a positive impact on many individuals and communities. However, this team is quite small and stretched.

Gato Munyamasoko, one of the leaders of the AEBR, and the organization's Legal Representative, said, "Change is like cultivating. At first it seems easy, but then you realize the roots are all tangled and have gone down quite deep." Gato continued to say, "When you take time to visit each of the AEBR regions and to develop relationships, it is like you are watering the soil before cultivating. . . . Once the soil is moist, the weeds will come out much easier."

Ken is still needed as a resource for school and church buildings, as funds are available. He primarily has been working alongside André Sibomana, the

Director of Community Development. This means that Ken has spent a lot of time travelling to visit the program sites, becoming familiar with project agreements and learning what an effective community development program looks like.

". . . we have also begun travelling to each of the AEBR regions; to speak during Sunday morning services, to attend special functions in the regions and also to bring greetings from you, the many people who support the CBM ministries in Rwanda. This means that our weekends as well as our week days are full, but it has been encouraging to see relationships starting to develop with the AEBR regional pastors."

Wendy spends more time in the AEBR office and has been working with the AEBR leadership, treasurer and accountant to compile and organize the financial management challenges and



struggles that have been identified into a multi-year work plan. She has also been providing some training sessions for Excel, a computer spreadsheet program.

One of the areas that the AEBR would like to prioritize is the implementation of the new financial policy and procedure manual. This will impact the AEBR head office, and also the churches and schools in every region. Wendy has been working with Gato Munyamasoko to develop a plan to manage these changes.

Why? The Derksens have felt a call for many years to local and global missions. Their international focus was heightened following a short-term mission trip to Rwanda to visit CBM's Orphans and Vulnerable Children program.

Please pray for the Derksens as they find that living in a different culture takes a lot of energy. "As soon as we leave our house we need to be alert, we need to pay attention to cultural clues and [be] trying to understand and communicate in a different language. Pray that we would grow in our understanding of how to build relationships effectively in a different culture."

Helen Hopper

Corresponding Secretary UBWMU/ABW

Sources: CBM Prayerline, Derksen Ministry Update August 2015