



PROFILES

2021

Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America

September 2021



Brothers from the African Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers in graduate studies at Iona Colleges in business and educational administration.

Christian Brothers from Africa at Iona College

For the past several decades the Iona College Brothers Community, Iona College, the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province, and the Africa Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers have collaborated in offering brothers from The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia the opportunity to study on the college's New Rochelle, New York, USA, campus.

The original groups of brothers came to complete bachelors' degrees. As undergraduate opportunities in Africa increased the more recent participants have come for graduate leadership programs.

Brother Robert Novak, CFC, Ph.D., a researcher, and Professor of Physics (see PROFILES January 2017 <http://ercbna.org/atimos/publications/Profiles/201701.pdf>) has coordinated the effort. He comments: *In the 1980's, the Brothers' Community at Iona College established the "Loftus Fund" to support Brothers from other Provinces to study at Iona College. For the past ten years, this fund as well as other contributions from Iona College have been used to support Brothers from Africa to finish their bachelor's degree and to pursue a master's degree. Brothers who have studied at Iona have returned to serve in leadership roles in the African Province: the current Provincial and Deputy Provincial and the Province Treasurer are Iona alums as is another brother on the staff of their international novitiate.*

The brothers' community at Iona College, a mix of professors, administrators, scholars in residence, and retired brothers, offers a stimulating context for religious life and study. Each morning they gather for the Eucharist in the Blessed Edmund Rice Chapel on campus and in the late afternoon join for vespers, community time and the evening meal. Their daily lives give witness to the brothers' Constitution: *Attentive to the word and open to the power of the Spirit, we are called as brothers to form gospel communities which are our principal means of evangelization.*

The Christian Brother scholars from Africa welcomed in this edition of PROFILES are Brother Prince Bai Tarawalie, CFC, and Brother Chrispinus Munialo.

Brother Prince Bai Tarawalie, CFC



Prince's first name is in recognition of his great grandfather, a paramount chief of their village in Sierra Leone. His mother gave birth to nine children, six boys and three girls. Prince was the sixth born.

His father, a teacher, belonged to the Dutch Reformed branch of an American Protestant faith group and had a significant role in developing Wesleyan schools in villages throughout the rural areas of the country. He chose to send all his children to Catholic school. He and his wife accepted the choice of each of the children to embrace Catholicism. The first born, Prince's sister, offered a guiding hand in the education of the siblings. She lives in Canada. His youngest brother in Virginia.

Prince came to know the brothers during his years at St. Francis secondary school in Makeni, Sierra Leone. Br. Patrick Titus Coffey was his principal. Other he knew at St. Francis included Brother Kieran Loughlin, Noel Bradshaw, Aiden Doherty and Patrick D. Walsh.

While attending the teacher training college in Meken, Prince met Brother Martin O'Reilly, then postulator of the Christian Brothers, and accepted his invitation to attend a 'Come and See' experience in Bo. He chose to enter in 1995-1996 a time of great challenge in the West African Region. Br. Senan Kerrigan was killed in August on the road from Bo to Freetown, Sierra Leone, on his way to attend the first West African Regional Assembly. War soon engulfed the whole county making land travel unsafe. Prince was air lifted by helicopter to Bo to join his postulant group. They moved on to Freetown for Novitiate in 1996. Six months later, because of the war dangers they were sent back to their home areas. Eventually the group was reassembled in Lusaka, Zambia, to become the first group in the two-year International Novitiate. Prince made his first profession of annual vows in 1999.

The war was still raging as he was missioned to Blama, Sierra Leone. He taught classes under the trees to children from the refugee camps. It was a full day with classes, providing food, and coordinating games. He later taught in the girls' school where he also served as deputy principal. After three years he resumed his training in spirituality and formation at Tangaza University College in Nairobi. In 2005 he served one year as vocation director and was subsequently appointed member of the formation team in Tamale, Ghana.

Prince made his profession of perpetual vows in 2008. The following year he was asked by the Province Leader to go for further studies in a program for leadership and formation in Loretto House in Dublin, Ireland.

Returning he had anticipated being re-assigned to a house of formation. Rather he missioned to Liberia where he completed his BA in Sociology and was appointed vice principal for administration in St. Martin's School in Gbarnga, Liberia. He held the position for five years while also teaching agricultural science in the senior school. Eventually he was named head of mission for the brothers in Liberia. His preparation in formation was well used in his accompaniment of post-novitiate, annually professed brothers in their first few years of ministry.



Above, Br. Prince Bai Tarawalie, CFC, third from the left in the group of Christian Brothers with Br. Cyril Dauda, CFC, (center in suit) on the day Cyril made his final profession. **Below**, the students of St. Martin's congratulate Br. Cyril.



In 2019 Prince was accepted for the master's in educational leadership at Iona College. Visa issues and Covid detained him in Sierra Leone. It was during this time that he gave a hand in St. Ambrose Academy,

PROFILES

Calaba Town, and where one night on a rush to the hospital the senior African brother, and his former novice director, Brother Charles Belmoh, died in his arms. Prince embraced the grace of the moment.



Above, Brother Charles Belmon, CFC, in red teaching a class at St. Ambrose School in Calaba Town, Sierra Leone, shortly before his death

Prince began classes on-line from Africa. By mid-winter 2021 was finally able to come to the Iona College Brothers residence in New Rochelle, NY.

He looks to a role in promoting the educational mission of the brothers responding to the call of the people of Africa for schools and of the Church for the evangelization of youth.



Brother Chrispinus Munialo, CFC



Chrispinus is the second of eight siblings, born in the western section of Kenya, bordering Uganda in a town named Busia. His father had worked for the government and then transitioned into small scale farming of sugar cane, casava and maize.

His sister, two years older, joined the Notre Dame de Nemur Sisters, opening Chris to the possibility of religious life. He attended college for IT and did some construction work and was active in his parish church. A friend, an Augustinian, suggested to Chris look into the Christian Brothers. A brief letter evoked an immediate response from the postulator, Brother Peter Cole, along with a follow-up visit. Chris was impressed and agreed to attend a 'Come and See' in Nairobi. Then, Chris relates, "I disappeared and went back to college."

Br. Peter tracked Chris down through his sister and invited him to consider entering formation. Chris' parents wanted him to finish college. Brothers Peter and George Massey came and met with the parents. They suggested to Chris that he keep talking with his mother and father about his sense of calling. One day Chris' mother said to him: "Go ahead if you insist, we do not know what plans God has for you." He called Br. Peter and said he had his parents' OK.

In 2008 he attended the postulancy in Tanzania and then joined the two-year International Novitiate in Tamale in Ghana. At the end of 2010 he was missioned to teach school in Eldoret, Kenya, along with two other brothers involved in social work. One of his first assignments was to find a new house for the young community. After three years he was assigned to Nairobi for studies. He completed a BA in Education at the Catholic University of East Africa. Br. Richard DeMaria from the North American Province was in his community and served as one of his mentors.

His next assignment was to the brothers' community in South Sudan where he taught in the teacher training college and served as mission bursar on the side. As the social outreach projects of the mission

became move involved he transitioned into being the full-time accountant for the mission. He pronounced his final vows in February 2020.



Above, Brother Chrispinus Munialo, CFC, and Sr. Caroline, SND, pose with their students from the South Sudan teacher training college on graduation day.



Left, Brother Chris in a ceremonial jacket is accompanied on the day of his perpetual profession by Iona alum and current Province Leader of the Christian Brothers in Africa, Brother Alfred Banda, CFC.

The following year he was invited to apply for the Iona College graduate program in business administration with a major in accounting. Covid delayed the start, however by the February 2020 he was able to get to New Rochelle and begin the program.

With his experience of drawing a minimal salary for teaching and being fully engaged in the grant management activities of the mission projects, Chris is mindful of the complexities of establishing self-sustaining ministries. He admires the work of Brother Isaac Odongo, a recent Iona MBA graduate, now addressing some of the financial issues of the African Province.

Chrispinus is now a member of the Iona College Brothers community and resides in one their three houses on campus. He was on hand to welcome Prince for the beginning of the Spring semester. Amid his studies, Chris devotes free time to cycling, and playing country and African music on the guitar. Brother Bob Novak, along with the other brothers in the community, is making

sure that Chris and Prince have a full introduction to New York and its surroundings.



On their arrivals of Chirs and Prince were each greeted by a New York snowfall. Brother Joseph 'Al' Cussen, CFC, (See PROFILES 2019 January <http://ercbna.org/atimos/publications/Profiles/201901.pdf>) included in the welcoming rituals a visit to a local big box store to obtain clothing to accommodate the winter months ahead.



Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice Chapel

Named for the founder of the Christian Brothers, the Chapel, a 19th century carriage house, was renovated and redesigned by Br. Chapman in 2003. Daily Mass is celebrated at the Chapel on weekdays during the semester, and the Iona Community of Christian Brothers meets here daily for morning & evening prayer and community Mass.



Africa. (2020) Br. Kenneth Chapman, CFC. Acrylic on canvas.
© Edmund Rice Christian Brothers Art Foundation, LTD

Brother Chapman's **Africa** was commissioned by former Dr. John Dower Handron and is featured as the cover of his recently published: ***The Brothers of Galeshewe: A Moment in South African Time***. The book explores the story of the continent, the progress of its peoples from being the cradle of civilization to apartheid and beyond, and the compelling story of the engagement of Brothers from the United States in the development of St. Boniface Mission. (Available from Amazon)

This edition of PROFILES closes with an invitation to pray for vocations and especially vocations to the vowed life as Christian Brothers.

Jesus has told us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers. Now is the time, the harvest is ready.

For information on youth ministry, volunteer opportunities, discernment, and consecrated religious life, contact:



Brother G. Timothy Smyth, CFC

gts@cbinstitute.org

+1 (630) 300 4697



<http://ercbna.org/>