



Malawi Adventist University

Photo courtesy of Mozecie Kadyakapita.

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TONNIE KATSEKERA, AND GRANT LOTTERING

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Malawi Adventist University is an institution of higher education owned and operated by the Malawi Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Malawi Adventist University (MAU) is located in the central region of the country of Malawi, in Chief Njolomole's area in the Ntcheu District, off Blantyre – Lilongwe Road, commonly known as the M1. The institution is about 28 kilometers north-west of the Ntcheu District headquarters, and about 178 kilometers from the commercial city of Blantyre in the south.

With Njolomole Village to the south-east and Mphoyo Village to the north-west, Malawi Adventist University is situated on the campus of the old Lakeview Mission station, where a primary school, secondary school, and a clinic are also situated. The mission station took the name "Lakeview," because from here, one can have a clear view of the beautiful Lake Malawi on its south-east shore.

Development that Led to the Establishment of the Institution

The first known Seventh-day Adventist to enter Malawi, then known as Nyasaland, was George James. Church funds were still insufficient to sponsor missionaries to open the work in Africa, therefore, James came to Africa as a self-supporting missionary. When James arrived in Africa, through Cape Town in January 1893, he proceeded to Nyasaland, traveling by ship through Durban and Chinde, at the mouth of the Zambezi River, and then up the Zambezi and Shire Rivers, and finally by hammock to Blantyre.¹ There he often visited missions of other Christian denominations and shared his faith freely. Aside from forming friendships with the nationals for which he was remembered fondly, George James never organized any formal Adventist group.²

In 1894, Adventists who pioneered the work in South Africa established a mission station just a few kilometers west of Bulawayo, in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) which they named Soluswe (now known as Solusi).³ When George James heard in 1894 that Adventist workers were sent to Southern Rhodesia, he determined to meet them there. Unfortunately he contracted malaria and died on the way, and was buried near the Zambezi River.⁴ The following year, 1895, G. B. Tripp, W. H. Anderson, and Dr. A. S. Carmichael were sent from America to pioneer the school and evangelistic work at Soluswe (Solusi Mission).

Solusi Mission became the spring from which Seventh-day Adventism abundantly flowed and spread northward beyond the Zambezi River. Meanwhile, the first Adventist church in Malawi was established in the southern region of Malawi, from which it spread further northwards. A couple of factors prepared the way for Adventism's easy acceptance among the people of Malawi. When Adventists became established in Malawi in 1902, George James was still fondly remembered among the nationals. Adventist teachings also were not entirely foreign to the people of Malawi, because many Protestant church missions were already working among the people of Malawi. There was a strong Seventh-day Baptist presence which already introduced the people of Malawi to the biblical seventh-day Sabbath before Adventists arrived there.

As soon as Adventists settled in Malawi, educational work began in 1902, when the General Conference purchased the Plainfield Mission from the Seventh-day Baptists. The Plainfield Mission was renamed Malamulo in 1907, which means "Commandments" in Chichewa, since the mission became associated with teaching

people the commandments of God.⁵ Education was one of the greatest needs of the people in Malawi. The church spread its influence throughout the territory by establishing mission schools and out-schools (village schools), which first taught people how to read and write.

Malamulo Mission became the epicenter from which the Adventist message spread throughout Malawi. The Lakeview Mission in the central region of Malawi was founded in 1934 as a direct result of Malamulo Mission's impact on the community.⁶ Two years later, in 1936, a mission school was opened at Lakeview under the leadership of Pastor Roman Chimera. As the number of mission schools and out-schools increased, the church in Malawi grew rapidly. By this time, the church's membership already reached 6000.⁷

While the number of schools and out-schools grew exponentially, the academic development of these schools did not keep up with the pace. For example, the first school, Malamulo, "did not become a junior secondary school until 1948."⁸

In the mid 1900s the government started to make grant-in-aid funds available for the mission schools, from which Seventh-day Adventist schools also benefitted. While they received these grants, they were permitted to remain autonomous mission schools operating independent from the government. However, in 1951, the Beecher Report on Education in Africa recommended policies to develop a public school system and intended to incorporate and integrate the mission schools. The government was prepared to assume some control over aided schools.⁹

While the New Education Act of 1952 directly implicated elementary school level of education, it did not attempt to establish tertiary institutions. The grant-in-aid which the mission schools received from the government for most of the first half of the twentieth century assisted the church to expand its territorial coverage by entering new areas, but it restricted the work of the church from developing beyond elementary education level. The demands from the government pressured the church to open more elementary schools so that they never really had an opportunity to expand other methods of mission work such as the opening of a ministerial training school for the clergy.¹⁰ Teachers in the mission schools had to perform pastoral work without adequate ministerial training.

The first attempt at offering ministerial training in Malawi was in 1947 when a two-year intermediate-level ministerial training program was started at Malamulo Nursing School.¹¹ Malamulo Nursing School offered health related certificate programs. The ministerial training program discontinued after four years, and the students were transferred to Solusi College in Zimbabwe to continue their ministerial training. At that time, Solusi College offered a degree in theology, and a ministerial diploma under a seminary program. When Solusi College diversified its curriculum in 1958 by offering more degree programs, including business, education and agricultural degree programs, it did away with the seminary program which offered the ministerial diploma, but retained the theology degree.¹² After Solusi College discontinued offering the ministerial diploma, the need to have a seminary in Malawi resurged.

Another significant factor prompted Adventist church leaders in Malawi to begin a local ministerial training school – the economic situation in Zimbabwe at the time. Since 1965, Zimbabwe was engaged in war fares in order to gain liberation. This resulted in an overall declining economy.¹³ Due to rapid inflation in Zimbabwe, the fees at Solusi College increased up to four times a year, which made it difficult for the South-East Africa Union Mission (now known as Malawi Union Conference) to support their students at Solusi College.¹⁴ The solution for alleviating the financial strain placed upon the Malawians in sending their students to Zimbabwe was to open a seminary in Malawi as soon as possible, where students could study for two years in education or ministry, and thereafter transition to Solusi College to complete their degree. It was reasoned that by completing two years of study in Malawi before transitioning to Solusi College would reduce the time students were required to be in Zimbabwe and so would bring some financial relief to the Malawians.

Founding of the Institution

Malawi Adventist University developed out of the Lakeview Seminary and Training Center. The Center was established to train pastors and laity for pastoral work in Malawi. The South-East Africa Union established Lakeview Seminary and Training Center in 1979 by an action of the executive committee to offer a two-year training program leading to a ministerial diploma, and a certificate in lay pastoral ministry. At the time of its establishment, Fred Wilson was the president of the South-East Africa Union. The South-East Africa Union Mission constituency was comprised of three mission fields, with 214 churches and 42 355 church members.¹⁵ Fred Wilson was succeeded in 1981, by the first native to become the president of the South-East Africa Union, Frank Botomani. Pastor Botomani was the Field secretary of the Trans-Africa Division at the time when he was elected to be President of the South-East Africa Union. He became the driving force behind the early developments of the Lakeview Seminary.¹⁶ Howard H. Mattison came from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist headquarters in the United States to head the work at the seminary. Wenson L. Masoka and Gorden R. Doss were the instructors when it opened in March 1980.

The Lakeview Seminary and Training Center was established at the Lakeview Mission Station near Mlangeni, Ntcheu, halfway between two major cities, Blantyre and Lilongwe.¹⁷ It was started as an autonomous entity with respect to Malamulo College. The plan was that Malamulo College continue to concentrate on health related education, while Lakeview Seminary would concentrate on ministerial training. Its location in central Malawi granted convenient access to the entire territory in Malawi.

History of the Institution

The delegates to the 1995 Malawi Union Mission Session held at Malamulo Mission in Thyolo expressed the need for a college to be established in Malawi to enable Adventist youth to have access to Christian higher education locally. At the time, Malawi had one government university which could not accommodate every

learner who qualified for university entrance in the country upon completing secondary education. The Adventist church in Malawi saw the need to provide an additional institution for higher learning. Consequently, “the delegates to the Malawi Union Mission Session... made a recommendation to the Malawi Union Mission Executive Committee to upgrade Lakeview Seminary to a junior college.”¹⁸

Following the recommendation of the 1995 Malawi Union Mission Session, the Malawi Union Mission Executive Committee took an action in 1996 to upgrade Lakeview Seminary to a junior college, offering the first two years of a four-year degree program of an already existing Seventh-day Adventist University outside Malawi!¹⁹ At that time, the laws of the government of Malawi did not provide for the establishment of private colleges and universities. Therefore, Lakeview Seminary could not obtain the government accreditation and it needed to affiliate with an accredited university. The preferred affiliation institution at the time was Solusi University in Zimbabwe. To grant affiliation to Lakeview College, Solusi University required that Lakeview College was recognized by the government of Malawi. Lakeview College could not obtain the government’s recognition and so the affiliation with Solusi University was not established.²⁰ Lakeview Seminary then reached out to the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB) in Kenya, that provide the necessary affiliation.²¹ “In 1999 the Malawi Union Mission Executive Committee decided to run the four-year degree programmes”²² to be affiliated with University Eastern Africa, Baraton. Consequently, Lakeview Seminary opened as Malawi Adventist College (MAC) in 2000 with Pastor Ernest Khonje as the principal, Pastor Hopekings Ngomba as business manager and Dr. Ronald Kanjira as registrar. Malawi Adventist College implemented the four-year degree programs of University Eastern Africa, Baraton, in Business Administration (offering Accounting and Marketing), Education, Theology, and Religious Studies.²³

Unfortunately, Malawi Adventist College’s affiliation with the University Eastern Africa, Baraton, was discontinued in 2002 due to the realignment of the Eastern Africa Division territory, which transferred Kenya to another division (East-Central Africa Division). MAC students who were not graduating in 2002 transferred to Solusi University in Zimbabwe or to the University Eastern Africa, Baraton in Kenya. Malawi Adventist College closed for the academic year of 2003 for reorganization.

Malawi Adventist College reopened on January 12, 2004, with an enrolment of seventeen students, under two administrators who also lectured at the College. These administrators were Dr. Mozecie S. Kadyakapita who was the principal, and Pastor Ernest S. Khonje who served as registrar and acting director of finance. In addition to these two lecturers were thirteen support staff who worked in various capacities. Daud K. Kasoti joined the college on April 14, 2004, to work as an accountant and director of finance, helping the young institution with financial management. The College principal, Dr. Kadyakapita, expressed his gratitude through a letter he wrote to the officers of the Malawi Union Mission and the South Malawi Field for their financial support in resuscitating the institution.²⁴

By the end of the first semester, on May 30, 2004, 47 full-time degree students, and 3 full-time and 7 part-time ministerial diploma students were enrolled. The second semester began on July 12 with 57 degree students and it ended on October 29, 2004, with 85 students enrolled.²⁵ The next year, in 2005, 17 full-time ministerial students enrolled.²⁶ Student accommodation was a matter of great concern, but to the relief and benefit of the Malawi Adventist College community, the 13th Sabbath Offering overflow of the first quarter of 2006 helped fund the construction of student dorms on Lakeview Campus.²⁷

New attempts were made to affiliate MAC with the University Eastern Africa, Baraton, commenced. "A delegation comprising Dr Miriam Mwita, Dr Tien'go, Mr Elijah Nyangena and Prof Joel Ogot, all of UEAB, visited the college in March 2006 to assess and evaluate the sustainability of the college for affiliation with the UEAB."²⁸ This visit led to the signing of an affiliation agreement between the two institutions, and Malawi Adventist College's degrees were "reorganized into three academic departments: Business studies, headed by Mr Chisomo Ngala; Theology and Religious studies headed by Ps Ernest Khonje, and Education, headed Mr Macleard Banda in acting position [sic]."²⁹

The affiliation between MAC and the University Eastern Africa was officially finalized on May 27, 2007, at Baraton, Kenya, by the officers from UEAB and those from Malawi, comprising: Dr. Saustin Mfuno, president of the Malawi Union Mission, Dr. Richie Kacelenga the Vice Chancellor of Malawi Adventist College, and Mrs. Margaret Masamba the Education director of the Malawi Union Mission.³⁰

In 2008, Professor Joel Ogot, the director of Affiliation and Academic Linkages at UEAB, visited the MAC and made recommendations to the Malawi Union Mission to restructure and reorganize the college into a university level institution. Malawi Adventist College's name was changed to Malawi Adventist University (MAU).

These developments incorporated Malamulo College of Health Sciences as a constituent college of the new Malawi Adventist University. Malawi Adventist University main campus is located at the former Lakeview Campus and continues to offer degree programs in arts and humanities, while the Malamulo Campus continues to offer health sciences. Malamulo College of Health Sciences offered certificate and diploma programs in nursing and midwifery, laboratory technology and clinical medicine. When Malamulo College became part of Malawi Adventist University, the process began for developing degree programs to be offered at Malamulo Campus.³¹

Infrastructural developments commenced with the arrival of Pastor Fred Wilson from the United States. Wilson had earlier served as the last expatriate president of the Malawi Union Mission. Under Wilson's leadership, staff houses, student residence halls, the clinic, the church, the classrooms, the administration block and the faculty offices were renovated. The Women's Hall of Residence, known as the Esther Hall, was funded by the world Church's 13th Sabbath Offerings in 2007.³²

Since 2009, the Malawi government began to recognize and accredit private institutions. Therefore, when Malawi Adventist University was due for accreditation as an institution by the Malawi National Council of Higher Education, affiliation with the University Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB) was no longer necessary. However, the affiliation with continued until 2016 when Malawi Adventist University developed its own graduate program.³³ Students who were still on the UEAB program in 2016 were given opportunity to complete their degrees with UEAB.

Historical Role of the Institution

Today Malawi Adventist University is one of the most well-known private universities in Malawi. Most of its graduates have good prospects of employment upon graduation. The MAU graduates are recognized for their integrity and competence.³⁴

MAU has also strengthened the work of the Adventist church in Malawi by providing ministerial training. Prior to the establishment of Lakeview Seminary and Training Center, students had to study for ministry abroad. Means were not always available for such endeavors and consequently many pastoral workers had to serve without adequate ministerial training. When Lakeview Seminary and Training Center opened in 1980, the church membership of the South-East Africa Union was 42,355. Since then, the institution has trained approximately 90 percent of the total ministerial workforce in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Malawi and membership growth increased to nearly 600,000.³⁵

In 2020, MAU offers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Education, Religious Studies and Pastoral Theology. The science degrees include Agriculture and Agri-Business Management, Medical Laboratory Science and Public Health. These programs cater for students from Lakeview and Malamulo Campuses. "Graduates from these programs are highly competitive and excel in pursuing postgraduate programs. The diploma programs include Clinical Medicine, Biomedical Sciences and Nursing (Three-year programs) while certificate programs are in Clinical medicine (Two-year program). These are highly motivated front-liners in health care services and they make a difference in the communities they work."³⁶

MAU also offers one post-graduate program, a Master of Science in Global Community Enterprise. This advanced degree prepares post-graduate students to "work alongside indigenous people to implement sustainable, enterprise, community-building projects." Students are "trained to work with local communities, governmental and non-governmental" and are "equipped to answer the call to professional service as God's ambassador of caring in a hurting world."³⁷ MAU also offers other graduate programs in collaboration with the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in Kenya including Accounting, Human Nutrition and Community Development among others.

Outlook

Plans for infrastructural improvements and developments remain a priority for the MAU constituency. Developments which are presently underway at Lakeview Campus include completing the men's dorm, completing the new water reticulation system, and the refurbishing of Chiwale Site for Certificate Programs at Malamulo Campus. Software development that is currently underway include online programs for Business, Public Health and Theology.³⁸ Planned future development include opening a MAU campus in the northern part of Malawi, developing a new MAU campus in Blantyre in the southern part of Malawi, and developing online programs in new areas.³⁹

Among the university's strategic initiatives are the following: creating a strong university leadership to represent all existing and emerging programs on both campuses; partnering with non profit organizations and other faith communities to better serve the marginalized in Malawi and beyond; and refining the undergraduate degrees to provide quality online learning and hybrid advanced degree offerings across Africa.⁴⁰

MAU offers bachelor's degrees in Theology, Religion, Accounting, Management, Marketing, English Language, English Literature, and Public Health. The bachelor's degrees in Finance, Taxation, Insurance, and Development Studies are currently under development.

Institution Name Changes

Lakeview Seminary and Training Center (1980–1999)

Malawi Adventist College (2000–2007)

Malawi Adventist University (2008–present)

List of Administrators

H. H. Mattison (1980–1981); B. L. Wright (1981–1986); B. D. Wheeler (1986–1987); G. R. Doss (1987–1997); E. S. Khonje (1997–2003); M. Kadyakapita (2004–2008); K. Mwale (2008–2012); R. Kanjira (2012–2013); M. Kadyakapita (2013–2017); S. Pittman (2017–present)

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