

# Musofu Mission School

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Musofu Mission School is a government recognized Seventh-day Adventist secondary school operated by the Copperbelt Zambia Conference.

## Developments that Led to the Establishment of the Institution

Musofu Mission, now regarded as an historical site, is located in Chief Chitina's area, north of Mkushi district near the Democratic Republic of Congo boarder in the Central province of Zambia. The mission is situated near Musofu River, about 20 miles from the Walamba railway siding. The name "Musofu" is derived from the Lamba word "Umusofu" which describes an elephant-infested area.

As early as 1907, Melvin C. Sturdevant desired to establish a new mission station in the northern part of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). From Rusangu mission, he traveled some 200 miles to the north of Rusangu Mission and found a splendid site at Mwembeshi, where people pleaded with him to remain. It would be ten years later, in 1917, when Samuel M. Konigmacher would follow this route and establish Musofu Mission.<sup>1</sup>

Until 1916 the only Adventist mission station in Northern Rhodesia was Rusangu Mission in the southern part of the country, opened by W. H. Anderson in 1905. In May 1916, Konigmacher went north from Rusangu to look for a site for a new mission station. Accompanied by his wife and son, he arrived in rural Ndola and first contacted Fula Mission station, belonging to the Baptist denomination. Based on the advice from the missionaries at Fula village, Konigmacher and his family set off into the southeast of Ndola to visit Chief Chitina in Mukushi, a distance of more than 80 kilometers through the jungle. They were escorted by five men who carried them on a stretcher known, in Lamba, as *amacila*, a form of transport available then. Chief Chitina accepted the request from Konigmacher to establish a mission station and granted a piece of land for this purpose.

The Musofu area was virgin territory as no other denomination had worked in this area before. A few years after he founded Musofu Mission, Konigmacher described the desperate living conditions of the people there as follows:

"The people are about as low as any tribe can be. I found them wearing the back of trees, beaten out and stretched, then sewed together. The children were practically naked, yet it was a true pleasure to hear them sing

the songs they had learned at school, as we gathered about a big camp fire. Surely the gospel of Christ is the power of God for salvation to all that believe."<sup>2</sup>

The opening of the school was to be the beginning of both Christianity and Adventism in that region.

## Founding of the Mission School

Early in 1917, the long-deferred plan of establishing yet another mission station in northern Rhodesia had finally arrived when Konigmacher visited the government officials in this district.<sup>3</sup> Here he was given title to 20 acres of land, with the promise of eight more acres should the work develop as Konigmacher had outlined it to them. It was here at Musofu Mission that Konigmacher was called upon to lay his third child in the grave, little Joseph who was taken with malaria. Following this sad loss, W. E. Straw, the president of the newly established Zambesi Union visited Konigmacher's family to render encouragement.<sup>4</sup> Straw saw how difficult the place was for the missionaries to live as it was infested with tsetse flies. The presence of the tsetse fly meant that no horses, mules, donkeys, or cattle of any kind could live.

By August 1917, an elementary school was opened under a tree where Konigmacher and his wife taught the natives how to read and write. This natural classroom site was preserved as a memorial, but the tree was used for wood to make furniture and it had vanished by the time of the centenary celebration in August 2017.

In 1918 the first permanent church building was built, which also served as a classroom. The Adventist message spread to neighboring chiefs such as Nkole and Mukonchi, leading to the opening of additional schools, among which were Pitala, Kalombe, and Mulamata (now Nkole Basic School). In rural Ndola, along the current Ndola-Kabwe Road, another school called Nkulumashiba (now Kabwata Secondary School) opened in 1920 with Lotson Sinyokosa as the pioneer teacher.

The first class was comprised of only male adults who were able to walk long distances and were able to put up with the dangers of the wild beasts in the jungle. The 17 male students who constituted the first class included: Ngalande Chilyobwe, Longwani Mumba, Frank Sitenta, Jacob Nkuluchila, Jeremiah Mupossi, Noah Poso, Luka Kasongo, Chatyoka (who later became Chief Nkole), Jailo Mwanakapini, Ntambamalwa, Duncan Ndatoya, Cimbabuya Machiko, Chasuka, Muswani, Enoch Mulamata, Peter Bwalanda, and Moris Kapimpa.

The attendance at worship services had already exceeded 100, with 170 pupils in regular attendance, surpassing that of Rusangu, although the mission had been founded only at the beginning of the year.<sup>5</sup> The Ten Commandments had been translated into the Chiswaka (Lamba) language, and the boys could recite them up to the fifth.

In 1919, Musofu Mission (also called Congo Border Mission), was visited by E. E. Andross, from the General Conference, accompanied by W. E. Straw. When they arrived at the Walamba railway siding, they found no one to meet them. They later found out that for two weeks, mission boys had been meeting each train but without

success due to a derailment that had taken place earlier, and the train the visitors traveled on was the first one which they had not thus met.

Chief Chitina was so happy with the work at Musofu Mission that he directed all his village headmen to send their children to the school and help construct facilities to provide shelter for students and their teacher. The first buildings were mud-and-pole huts with grass thatched roofs, supplemented by the tents and wagons of the missionaries.

By 1921, Rusangu and Musofu were the most prominent missions in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>6</sup> Musofu Mission had six outlying schools and calls were constantly being received for the opening of more schools. The largest outlying school was 100 miles east of Musofu in Lala country at Lukosni (probably Lukomba) with 73 pupils in attendance.<sup>7</sup> Konigmacher indicated that they had sent five companies of teachers into other sections of the country to tribes where the Adventist message had not yet gone. Musofu's outlying schools were located amongst three tribes, while at the Musofu school there were 130 boys from Congo and two from far away near Portuguese West (Angola). One of the boys who came from Congo was Matthew Chiwanga who became the first convert from the Lala country.<sup>8</sup> Chiwanga did not only become Konigmacher's head boy, but a head teacher and a minister.<sup>9</sup>

When F. E. Thompson visited Musofu in December 1924, he found that C. E. Wheeler and his wife had just completed building four square native huts made of sundried bricks for students.<sup>10</sup> Around each hut were a few fruit trees to mark the beginning of the new self-supporting garden plan for feeding the boys. Musofu mission also had a new school book, the *Lamba First Reader*, or as Wheeler called it, *Icitatikilo*. That year, 22 converts were baptized, and a larger baptismal class was being preparing for the next baptism.<sup>11</sup> The spiritual atmosphere of the school was good and they had just completed a week of prayer.

## The History of the School

The reorganization of the church work in southern Africa, when it was part of the African Division in 1920, resulted in the creation of the North Rhodesia Field with headquarters in Lusaka. Ray F. Stockil, who was the director for Rusangu Mission, also became president of the new mission field.<sup>12</sup> Musofu was the most northern most mission in the African Division until Songa Mission was opened in 1919. Musofu therefore served as a stepping stone for mission penetration to the north of Northern Rhodesia. Its contribution toward mission expansion was demonstrated in the establishment of Chimpempe Mission in 1921.<sup>13</sup>

Out of this quest to extend the missionary work further north, in 1919 six men, two whites (M. Sparrow and H. J. Hurlow) and four Africans (Longwani Mumba, Frank Sitenta, Peter Bwalanda, and Ngalande Chilyobwe, all of whom were first students at Musofu) were sent along the Luapula River to look for a place where another mission station could be opened.

Upon reaching Kawambwa, they were received by Chief Kabanda of the Bemba people, who gave them a piece of land along the Kalungwish River. On this land, the Chimpempe Mission station was located. *Chimpempe* is a Bemba word for a cataract or small waterfall. Work at Chimpempe Mission started in 1921 with Ngalande Chilyobwe, a graduate of Musofu, serving as one of the pioneer teachers.

Further steps were taken to facilitate mission expansion. In the 1922, W. H. Branson, the president of the African Division mandated W. S. Straw, the president of the Zambesi Union to maintain only one mission station in each local mission field and regard all other missions, including Musofu, as outstations, so as to release workers and funds for unworked territories in the union. During the first meeting of the North Rhodesia Committee, held at Rusangu Mission, it was decided to operate the work at Congo Border Mission (Musofu) and at the Upper Zambezi (Liumba Hill) mission as outstations.<sup>14</sup> The schools at these stations were to be operated as day schools only. Meanwhile, Rusangu Mission was to be built up as a strong main station, its school becoming responsible for the education of the most promising students who would be educated in a boarding school setting. Ronald C. L. Thompson, however, reports that this proposal was never implemented as planned.<sup>15</sup> By 1931, the Musofu, Rusangu, and Chimpempe Missions in North Rhodesia were still directed by expatriate missionary leaders after dropping the idea of reducing missions to outstations.<sup>16</sup>

In mid-1921, J. V. Wilson and B. E. Beddoe visited Musofu Mission, finding Konigmacher and his wife hard at work,<sup>17</sup> and waiting for the arrival of C. E. Wheeler's family. The visitors heard the students recite Scripture verses they had memorized. There were about 140 students in attendance at the school. Pastor Beddoe conducted three meetings a day. After one meeting, he called upon them to remove all ornaments, and quite a large pile was handed in. At the next meeting, not a single person was seen wearing a bead or bracelet. Many took a stand to accept Christ for the first time, and on Friday 35 were baptized. One of those baptized was a leper, whose name was Chilema, who was carried in a *machilla* and was baptized while sitting in a chair.

A Missionary Volunteer Society was introduced at Musofu Mission on February 11, 1922.<sup>18</sup> It began with a membership of 60. Although the work was new to all, it was received with eagerness. The boys walked to as many as five or six villages per week to hold meetings. Many of the younger workers forgot their tribe differences as they did Christian help work. The *Lamba* New Testament had come out that same month, and the Bible reading plan that should have taken six weeks, was finished by some in one week, even though they could only read after work and school. By the end of the first quarter, in just six weeks, 114 meetings had been held by the Missionary Volunteers, with from 30 to 120 people present at these meetings.

Two outstanding reading reports came from two little boys called Mark and Kowili.<sup>19</sup> Three days before the end of the five weeks from when the time the Bible reading plan was introduced, Mark, with a beaming smile, announced that he had finished reading the whole New Testament. Then, Kowili, a boy of a low standard in school, came second, completing the reading in exactly five weeks. Another active member, the leper, unable to leave his hut, was sending many letters reporting work done in the way of giving food to strangers passing

through his village and showing them a place to sleep. At the same time, he talked to them of Jesus. The active Missionary Volunteer spirit of that poor leper became a source of encouragement to all.

From March 7 to 14, 1923, a Bible Institute was held at Musofu Mission for the teachers and other workers of the outlying schools.<sup>20</sup> J. V. Wilson, the superintendent of the North Rhodesia Field, was the guest speaker. His instructions to the teachers were practical and timely. Three studies on important topics of the Adventist message were given each day. Some of those studies were translated and copies were given to each teacher so they could have something fresh to teach in their village schools on their return. On Sabbath, March 10, they celebrated the ordinance of holy communion. They all felt that the Lord had drawn near to them by His Spirit, although their baptized leper friend, Chilema, died during that same period and was laid to rest to await the coming of the Savior. The local people (natives) had just passed through a trying time of famine, but they were of good courage that the work was moving onward.

The year 1923 was of special significance to Musofu Mission because the first native camp meeting was held there.<sup>21</sup> F. E. Thompson and T. M. French visited the Wheeler family, who were in charge of Musofu, having arrived on August 27. The camp meeting started the following month on September 2-4. There were about 160 Sabbath keepers, with a goal to double that number the following year. On the last day of the camp meeting ten were baptized.

The April 1, 1927, issue of the *African Division Outlook* announced the arrival of the W. S. Smith family at Musofu Mission, consisting of Smith, his wife, and two children.<sup>22</sup> They came from the Somabula Mission in Southern Rhodesia.

## The Historical Role of the School

Musofu Mission's contribution to the development of society was recognized early by traditional leaders. For example, while B. M. Heald was holding a week of prayer at Musofu School from March 13-21, 1927, the chief of the district expressed appreciation to him for Musofu Mission's work in his country and he wished to be given more outlying schools in his villages.<sup>23</sup>

Even as early as 1923, some of the students who had graduated from Musofu Mission had settled north of Broken Hill (Kabwe), where they practically led the whole village in keeping the Sabbath.<sup>24</sup> A similar story is reported of the missionary work of a student who graduated from Rusangu Mission. The spiritual impact that mission schools had on students only became evident much later through the former students' missionary work after they had left school.

From this background, Musofu later became recognized as the mother of most of the existing primary and secondary schools in Central, Luapula, and Copperbelt provinces of Zambia. Having been established before the country's political independence, Musofu school contributed in various ways towards Zambia's liberation

through her alumni who played significant roles in the economic, political, social, and religious development of the country.

Musofu school's curriculum has evolved along with the development of the education system in Zambia through adoption of various educational policies. Thus, the evolution of the curriculum of Musofu may be divided into (1) the indigenous period (1917-1952), (2) the colonial period (1953-1963), and (3) the post-independence period (1964-present). Unlike many other mission schools, which were built mainly to teach literacy and numeracy skills, Musofu's initial aim was to foster an understanding of the Bible through the curriculum it followed. Beginning in 1917, a period referred to as the pre-independence period, and including the colonial period, the school offered courses for sub-Standard A-B, and Standard 1-5.

Two years after independence, in 1966, the grade system was introduced in Zambia; subsequently, the curriculum approach also changed. In the new system, Musofu was organized as a grant-aided school, offering primary education from grades one through seven. In 1988 Musofu was granted a Basic Secondary School status, making possible the addition of grades eight and nine classes. In 2014 senior secondary classes were opened leading to Grade 12 School Certificate examinations, the first of which sat in 2016, with a pass percentage of 97%. The second graduating class became Musofu's centenary class of 2017, with a pass percentage of 77%. The administration of the school consists of the mission director (also serving as chaplain) and the principal.

The year 2017 was an historic year for Musofu Mission as it marked its 100 years of existence. To celebrate this accomplishment, a special camp meeting was held to commemorate the sacrificial work of the missionaries and the contribution of Musofu Mission to the local community, the nation, and the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. The camp meeting event was organized by the Copperbelt Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, under the leadership of Dr. Webster Chabe, president; Pastor Christopher Mwampokota, executive secretary; and Elder Eliudie Masamba, Chief Financial Officer.

The honored guest who graced the occasion was the Minister of Justice, Honorable Mr. Given Lubinda MP, who represented His Excellence, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, in recognition of the contribution of Musofu School to the national economic, political, social, and spiritual development. The Minister declared Musofu Mission a national historic site at which a national monument should be developed.

## Future Outlook

A review of Musofu Mission was done by various groups. The most prominent groups were the former students (alumni), and the veteran retired gospel ministers and teachers whose experiences at the mission greatly helped in the compilation of this article.

At the time of writing this article there were 810 pupils. Of this number, 490 were day primary pupils (Grades 1-7), and 320 secondary pupils (Grades 8-12), most of whom were weekly boarders. The infrastructure establishment includes five (1 x 3) classroom blocks out of which three were specialized rooms: one for computer studies and the other two are science laboratories. There were two dormitories, one for boys and the other for girls, plus 13 staff houses. The oldest classroom block which houses the primary school was built in 1957.

Musofu School is a government recognized combined school operating on the Zambian curriculum system with vocational and business studies career pathways. There are 13 teachers, including the head teacher and his deputy. These are made up of six primary school teachers and seven secondary school teachers.

According to the Zambian land tenure, the 99-year lease title for Musofu Mission land lapsed when the mission reached 100 years of existence in 2017. Therefore, one of the priorities is the renewal of the title for the land to protect it from encroachments. Other priorities are for the church and government to work together to provide the basic infrastructure to address the problems of the road which accesses the school, improving school transportation, accommodation, communication, and the electricity power supply.

## Directors/Principals

S. M. Konigmacher (1917-1922); C. E Wheeler (1923-1928); W. S. Smith (1929-1931); \_\_\_\_ (1932); J. G. Siepman (1933-1936); G. Hiten (1937); S. M. Konigmacher (1938-1939); \_\_\_\_ (1940-1941); B. Searle (1942); W. M. Cooks (1943-1948); S. T. Paive (1950-1953); J. R. Burns (1954); D. G. Ristow (1955); G. L. van Niekerk (1956-1961); M. O. Klausen (1962); G. A. Otter (1963-1966); \_\_\_\_ (1967); J. P. Sisala (1968-1969); S. E. Monga (1970-1971); \_\_\_\_ (1972-1976); Chipabila (1977-1989); D. Sikanyiti (1989-1990); Kabenda (1991-1997); Mr. Lengwe (1998-2000); C. Damiano (2000-2004); M. Kabila (2004-2010); J. Mokola (2010-2015); P. C. S. Mafuta (2016- ).

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